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HOW AUSTRALIA SHAPED MY CAREER
— AND WHY I'M COMING BACK



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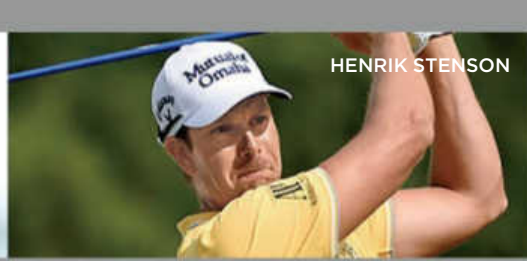
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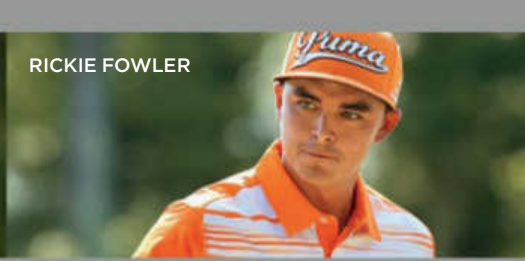
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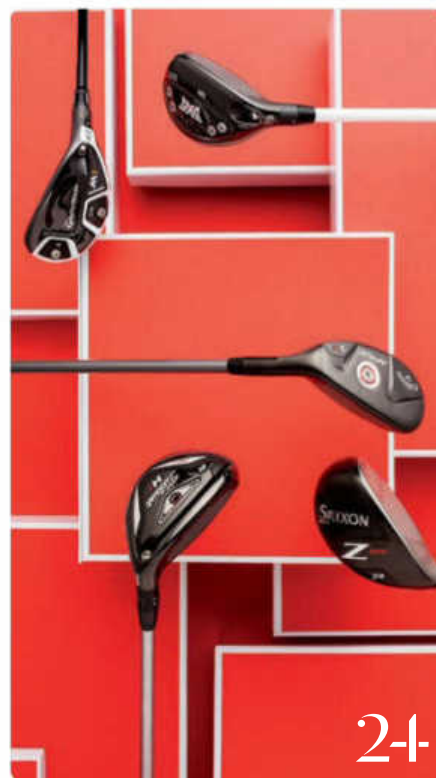
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Editor's Letter



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Our guide to the perfect golf trip

WELCOME to *The Travel Issue* – a month where we highlight some of the great golf destinations in Australia and abroad.

Let's face it; golf and travel go together like peaches and cream, so when the opportunity arises to do both, you need to jump on it.

But for everything that can go right on a golfing adventure with friends or family, things can go pear-shaped just as quickly if a few precautions aren't taken.

So after feeling inspired by this issue, don't go ahead and book your 2016 golf trip without reading our seven keys to making it a success. Happy travels!

1. Plan well in advance

Your boss. Your partner. That guy in the pro shop. Don't give anyone a chance to say you can't go on this golf trip. To ensure universal approval and to nab your desired tee times, start planning six to twelve months in advance. Be upfront about the amount of time you'll spend away from home, and overestimate the amount of time you'll be away from your mobile phone and computer.

2. Consider the company you keep

A group of mates could just as easily visit the world's worst golf resort and have a blast as it could travel to Pebble Beach and be miserable. More than lodging, food, weather and even the golf courses, the *people* you bring are key. Golf trips take you out of your comfort zone. You're away from home, sleeping less than usual, playing unfamiliar courses, competing hard and, in a lot of cases, drinking copiously. This isn't the time to introduce your pals to a friend who "might" irritate the hell out of them. He will, and the trip will suffer because of it.

3. Put a dictator in power

There is a time and a place for democracy, but a golf trip isn't it. Too many opinions about courses, hotels, formats – you name it – risk making every decision unnecessarily complicated. Instead, pick someone who you all trust to lead the way and allow him or her to delegate responsibility. Maybe one of you is in charge of pairings. Someone else can pick the dinner spots. You don't have to love every decision they make. But trust us, it sure beats not getting anything done at all.

4. Establish the ground rules early

Chances are you'll know beforehand how much you're spending on lodging, golf and transportation. But gambling? Food and

drink? Other off-course stuff? It helps a lot if your trip leader can give some direction on the costs before you go. All it takes is a simple note added to the itinerary: We eat dinners as a group and allow \$40 per head, etc.

5. Have an off-course plan

Hopefully, you've planned a decent-length trip, but even so, the last thing you want to do is waste time deciding which chain restaurant to go for dinner. Know your options in advance so you're not looking things up and make quick decisions. Are you really going to remember where you eat? No, you're going to remember hanging out with your friends or family. Stop Googling which local bar pours the best craft beer and get out and enjoy yourselves!

6. Prepare to be punished

Most golf trips involve an insane amount of golf, and that's a wonderful thing. Don't let soreness, blisters or fatigue stop you. Stock your golf bag with anti-inflammatories, band-aids, athletic tape and Vaseline. Get plenty of rest before you board the plane, since eight hours of sleep on any given night during a golf trip won't happen. And stretch before and after your round, more than you would otherwise.

7. Give ample thought to pairings

If you're travelling with a group of people who get along well, there shouldn't be any problems putting together foursomes. That being said, a trip can be enhanced by mixing things up. Don't just ride in a cart with that same guy you also play all your rounds at home with. You should make sure you play with everyone else in the group at least once. Also, larger groups should be balanced. Don't ever pair four slow players together or four golfers struggling with their golf games. Unless, of course, you're trying to deter certain people from coming on next year's trip...



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Your Say

Caption this!

How would you caption this photo of Darren Clarke sharing a laugh with young Aussie Todd Sinnott over the Auld Claret Jug recently? E-mail your entry to australiangolfdigest@mma.com.au and we'll publish the best one in our next issue. Get thinking!



This issue's caption winner will receive a **Cobra Tour Trusty Wedge** worth \$129 and player towel worth \$39.95, courtesy of Cobra-PUMA Golf.



Congratulations **Rod Ruston** for this funny take on Rory McIlroy competing against Charl Schwartzel in the Turkish Airlines Gourmet Golf Challenge. It appears Rory should stick to his golf. Rod, your new **Cobra Tour Trusty Wedge** and towel are on their way.



"So what do you think of my Bent grass salad with hybrid vegetables?"



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• LETTER OF THE MONTH •

Time for course designers to rethink macho approach

"GOLFERS like to be punished..." says Greg Norman in the course guide for his National (Moonah) course. Well, Greg, I've just played your course and I beg to differ.

A group of my mid-low handicapper mates did a Mornington Peninsula swing a couple of weeks ago. At The National we played both the Moonah and the Old courses. The Moonah (eighth in the AUSTRALIAN GOLF DIGEST Top 100 course rankings) would have got rave reviews from the group if not for one thing. Here's why.

The Cups Country of the Mornington Peninsula isn't rugged, but the Moonah is a long walk and the wind is usually up. Stepping up to the 16th tee, we were all a little weary and looking forward to cruising home. And then it hit us – the 16th is a 422m par 4, index 1. Wait, what?

OK, so off we go and a few double-bogeys and wipes later we stand at the 17th – 170 metres of par 3, stroke index 7. Great hole, no points. We are all plain knackered now and the 18th has an index of 3, with 387 metres of diabolically undulating fairway. None of us are able to get over the first huge hump, leaving impossible fairway metals to a narrow green. We are lucky to score a point between us. This is clearly the work of Greg – The Punisher.

As I trudged off the 18th, slumped-shouldered, I had a flash – this is what happened at my home course, Sanctuary Lakes. You guessed it – another Greg Norman design. Three brutal finishing holes with the 18th ranked index 2. And wait, what about other Norman designs – Settler's Run, where its 18th is an intimidating, uphill par 4. There's a pattern here.

I understand that course designers aspire to "championship" courses – ones which could host a tournament at some point. You need a tough finishing stretch to build the tension, but with all due respect, National Moonah is unlikely to host a tournament. Its purpose is to be an inspirational outing for handicap golfers.

Contrast this punitive approach to course design with the lovely finishing hole at Woodlands – the course we all played on the last leg back to the city – a gentle par 5 with an index of 17. Crikey, even I have hit this in two (once, with a following breeze). Here you have the chance to win the game and walk off feeling good, rather than lose it and storm off muttering.

We hear a lot of talk about making golf more accessible, enjoyable and faster. I suggest some re-thinking of the macho approach to finishing holes is on the agenda. They're fine for you, Greg, the longest, straightest driver of your era, but do you have to punish the rest of us?

Simon Britton, via email

THIS MONTH'S WINNER!

Congratulations *Simon Britton*, who wins a **Cobra Fly-Z Hybrid**, courtesy of Cobra-PUMA Golf.



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Shark Bite Bunker

Thana City Golf & Sports Club, Bangkok, Thailand

IS IT a gimmick or artistic licence? Maybe both. Whatever you may think of it, the Shark Bite Bunker is certain to leave an impression upon visitors to Thana City Golf & Sports Club in Bangkok.

So how did it come about?

Thana City engaged the Australian architectural firm Pacific Coast Design to modernise its course two years ago. Originally designed by Greg Norman and Bob Harrison, many of the golf features on the layout had been made redundant (by equipment improvements and technical advances in golf construction) since the course opened in 1993.

The renovations by PCD included a linking of holes 16, 17 and 18 into what has become known collectively as the 'Shark Bite'. The pièce de résistance is the 'Shark Bite Bunker', fronting the island green on the 18th.

In homage to the original designer, PCD director Phil Ryan says: "Fellow director Paul Reeves and myself think highly of Greg Norman as he has contributed a lot to golf, especially Australian golf. Although a competitor in golf architecture, you have to give credit where credit is due.

"The 18th island green sits directly in front of the clubhouse and we were discussing how best to finish the Shark Bite stretch of holes and came up with a Shark Bite Bunker, which was really well received by the management as it's visually dominant from the restaurant.

"It was a bit of fun actually and meant to be a talking point when people left the golf course to remember Thana City was just a little bit different.

"We've had only good comments so far and I think it's doing the job as intended – both as a bunker and marketing tool."





He Said
What?



"Adam Scott, you should have a look at Cameron Smith and how he plays wedges." – **Wayne Grady's** forthright appraisal of the former world No.1 while commentating at the Australian PGA Championship.

Aussie of the Month

Nathan Holman

LAUNCHED his professional career with a maiden tournament victory, the Australian PGA Championship at RACV Royal Pines Resort on the Gold Coast.

Holman rebounded from an opening 5-over 77 to snatch the lead on Sunday. Then after bogeying his last two holes to finish on even par, the 24-year-old Victorian defeated South African Dylan Frittelli and American Harold Varner III with a par on the first playoff hole. Apart from collecting the Kirkwood Cup, the Woodlands Golf Club member picked up the summer's largest pay cheque for capturing the first

tournament of the 2016 European Tour season. The first prize of \$315,000 elevated Holman to the top of the PGA Tour of Australasia moneylist, which gives him an invitation to the 2016 British Open at Royal Troon. He also has a playing card on the European Tour through 2017, a five-year exemption on the PGA Tour of Australasia plus an invitation to the 2016 World Golf Championships-Bridgestone Invitational.

"It's huge," said Holman of the rewards. "I didn't realise what was on the line really. It's probably a good thing to be honest. I did think I'd get to those events in the future. I didn't think it was going to be this quickly."

2015 Australian PGA Champion, Nathan Holman



HEADLINERS

ROYAL PINES' 18TH: With its potential for drama, Graham Marsh's newly designed green complex – which features steep run-offs and a vertical drop over the back – has made this the most riveting finishing hole in Australian tournament golf.



MARC LEISHMAN [above]: Ended a tumultuous year by winning the Nedbank Golf Challenge by six strokes at Sun City, South Africa. He nearly lost his wife Audrey in April when she was hospitalised with acute respiratory distress and toxic shock syndrome.

JARRYD FELTON: Came through pre-qualifying to win the NSW PGA Championship in just his fifth start as a professional. The two-stroke victory at Riverside Oaks in northwest Sydney gives the 20-year-old Western Australian

a two-year exemption on the PGA Tour of Australasia.

BRYDEN MACPHERSON: Topped the moneylist on the PGA Tour China with earnings of ¥769,960. Two victories and six consecutive top-five finishes earned Macpherson a fully exempt Web.com Tour card.

ROHAN BLIZARD: Runner-up at the Capital Airlines – HNA Real Estate Championship on the PGA Tour China to finish seventh on the moneylist. He receives a conditional card to play the 2016 Web.com Tour.

IAN BAKER-FINCH: Praised by Tiger Woods as the only broadcaster who leaves the commentary booth to scout the course and talk to players.

JASON AND ELLIE DAY: Shared first shots of baby Lucy on social media [above right]. The gesture came shortly after Jason received the inaugural Greg Norman Medal for Australia's best-performed touring professional on the international stage.

JARROD LYLE: Scored two



holes-in-one at a charity golf day in Melbourne. The recipient of the US PGA Tour's Courage Award had been stationed on the 149-metre 15th at Yarra Yarra, hitting a shot for each group for the Challenge fundraiser.

WARWICK HILL-RENNIE: Appointed general manager at Royal Melbourne Golf Club.

RACHEL HETHERINGTON, VIRGINIA IRWIN AND SHANI WAUGH: Added to Golf Australia's national coaching

panel. Along with the five existing national coaches – Ritchie Smith (WA), Dean Kinney (NSW), Marty Joyce (Vic), Tony Meyer (Qld) and Gareth Jones (SA) – the women join Ryan Lumsden, Stuart Leong and Paul Skinner as members of the extended panel.

GOLD COAST COUNTRY CLUB: Closed to become a large residential development. Built in the early 1990s, the Fred Bolton layout at Helensvale had hosted the Queensland PGA Championship.

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Brett Ogle is the host of the Fox Sports Golf Show and a two-time winner on the US PGA Tour.

Webb of Intrigue

Adelaide's magic aura – and why we may never see another Karrie

CONFESSION time: I love Adelaide.

Sure, that might have something to do with the fact I won a few golf tournaments there back in the day. Back-to-back South Australian Open victories in the '90s still sit fresh in my mind.

But there has always been something about this region that appealed to my taste despite not being a big wine drinker. It's surely the sheer quality of the golf on offer that has left an indelible impression on me all these years.

Royal Adelaide, Glenelg, Kooyonga and The Grange – four of the great sandbelt-style courses you'll play outside of Melbourne and all special in their own way [see page 84]

Suffice to say, I am pleased to see a major golf tournament return to the City of Churches this month. With the ISPS Handa Women's Australian Open heading to The Grange West Course, the South Australian capital gets what it truly deserves as one of Australia's premier golf cities.

Headlining the week will be the return of defending champion and world No.1 Lydia Ko. What a player. I remember watching her win her first big tournament at the 2012 New South Wales Open at Oatlands when she was barely a teenager and thinking, *How did she do that?* While I'm a little surprised she hasn't won

more Majors already in her blossoming career, I'm quietly confident they will come in a resume that looks destined to match Annika Sorenstam's 10-Major stint at the top of women's golf. The 18-year-old simply needs to start treating the bigger events like any other LPGA Tour event. Despite her incredible talents and temperament, I feel she still puts extra pressure on herself to win the big events.

Another talented youngster we'll see is our own Minjee Lee. I'm often asked who's our next Karrie Webb? While Minjee fits the bill as our most talented young player in recent times, lumping her with the expectation she can match Karrie's Hall-of-Fame career is unrealistic, if not unfair.

The reality is we won't see another Karrie Webb, for a number of reasons, not least

the overflowing depth of talent in women's golf coming out of Asia. The LPGA Tour is a highly competitive beast and when you have the likes of Ko and five-times Major champion Inbee Park, 27, at the peak of their powers and still so young, stringing together multiple victories in a season is as big of an achievement as it's ever been.

Karrie is a superstar and it's great that our young players still look up to her for inspiration, but the dynamics of women's golf have changed dramatically over the past decade and as such, Karrie comparisons hold no place in the career aspirations of young Aussie players. Having said that, I truly believe Minjee has the talent to win Majors. But she'll have start the run soon because, as Karrie now knows, it gets harder and harder with every passing year.



HIGH FIVES: Minjee Lee [left] may have taken over the mantle of Australia's No.1 female player, but can she go on to match the stellar career of Karrie Webb?

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Mini Golf Madness

The day a putt-putt pro took things way too far

IT WAS the perfect storm. Phil Collins was gently wafting his way through the loud speakers, but not full bore, just loud enough to hear.

"I've been trying ooh so long, to let you knooooow. Let you know how I feeeeeeel."

Someone once told me they thought Collins wrote music to murder by.

I was with my Dad, and we were working our way through the course with purpose. We'd been freewheeling our way around but as often happens in golf, things were about to change.

Playing in the group ahead of us was Adam Scott. Not the Adam Scott, but an Adam Scott clone. A fan. Possibly psychotic, he looked like the type of fan who should never be allowed to get anywhere near the real Scotty because he'd probably want to cut a piece of him off and take it home to chew on. I don't reckon it would have been a trinket of hair, either.

And this bloke, this Scotty wannabe, was with a couple of mates who looked like they were students of the would-be Adam, maybe even disciples, for their leader would gather the two of them at the beginning of each hole and talk to them in deliberate, encouraging tones about the journey that lay before them.

One of them carried Adam's stuff for him, like a caddie. It was intense. And all the while, Collins is blathering on, surreptitiously worming his way into our heads, driving me slowly mental. You see, it wasn't

an album, but the same song on repeat.

"One more night, oh one more night. Give me one more night, 'cos I can't wait forever."

The woman in the putter hut must have been in the middle of a breakup, and was either using the song to get through it, or she was back there sharpening putter heads so she could go visit her former love and do him in.

All she needed was "one more night."

And up ahead, Adam's starting some kind of putt-putt cult!

"And if you sail away I will follow you..."

While he didn't particularly look like Scotty, his dress and the way he carried himself was eerily en pointe. Titleist hat, UNIQLO golf shirt, sharp white pants and golf shoes. Golf shoes ... at putt-putt?

It was pretty funny, until it wasn't. I said to Dad, "This is going to take hours. Do you reckon we could play through?"

"I've been sitting here so long. Wasting time, just staring at the phone."

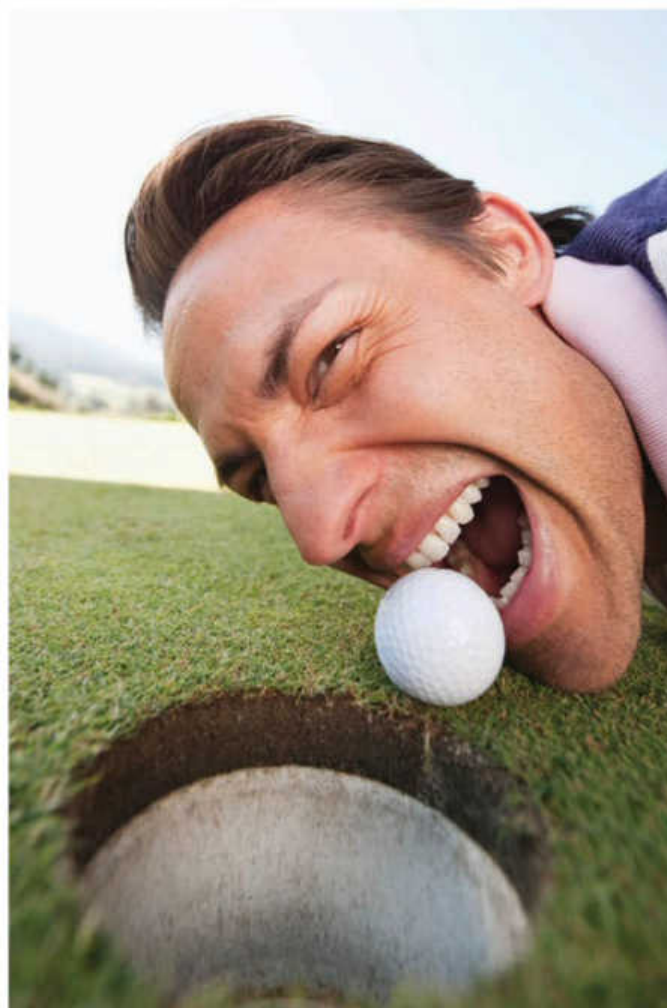
Dad was like, "Andrew. Relax. It's putt-putt. It's meant to be fun, we've got nothing else to do. Chill out."

But that was becoming increasingly difficult. Adam-the-cult-leader was stalking putts from every possible angle. To make things worse, he was also employing that new balance thing Scotty does, where he stands with his legs akimbo and tries to feel the tilt of the earth beneath him. And because he was right into it, he'd adapted the already annoying method employed by the pros and turned it into something even longer.

"But if you change your mind you know that I'll be here..."

"What's he up to? It's like he's doing the Hokey Pokey," says Dad.

"I'm going insane," I blurted. "No one takes mini golf this seriously. We have to get through this knob."



And I'm huffing and puffing and trying to make noise. I'm being obvious and annoyed and leaning on my club and folding and unfolding my arms and all the stuff we do on a real golf course to exert our will upon the tools ahead holding up the universe. But nothing's working.

"I've been sitting here so long. Wasting time..."

This guy is not only doing the balance thing, but he's doing it in a circle. He's actually doing it in 360 degrees ... as if it's in 3D. Crap, he's doing a 3D modelling of the putt he's about to hit, only it's putt-putt.

He could be a genius.

"Give me one more night, oohhooohoo, one more night!"

Eventually, he gets over his ball, takes a couple of practice

swings and fires. It's amazing, beyond belief really. But then, maybe not. The disciples look on, a little breathless, hearts a flutter. He's actually had an airswing. In putt-putt. Oh crap, he's going to go through his pre-shot routine, *again*.

I said to Dad, who I was giving an absolute towel-up, "How's this bloke, Dad. Who does he remind you of?"

Dad looked at me, squinted a bit, went to say something and stopped. He shook his head.

"Dad, seriously, who does he remind you of?"

"You, son," says Dad.

"What?" I exclaimed.

"That is almost exactly what you're like," he fired back.

"Almost exactly, Dad?"

"Yep. He's got more hair."

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IF YOU want to know why today's fairway woods [left page] and hybrids produce longer shots, brush up on your science. Specifically, metallurgy. Many new designs use exotic steel alloys in the face to improve ball speed. Their names (455, 475, HT1770, C300) and nerdy ingredients (molybdenum, anyone?) might sound dull, but their properties are white hot. These metals have what's called "high tensile strength," which means they can endure a lot of stress (sometimes 115,000-plus kilograms per square inch) before failure. The greater the strength, the thinner companies can make a clubface, which means more flex and less weight. (That saved weight can be used to preserve stability on off-centre hits, control spin and enhance energy transfer.) Those are good reasons to like these metals, but here's a better one: Some are used in missile casings and jet fighters. Here are 10 new metalwoods to help you launch a few of your own:

The Art of the Steel

Exotic metals are powering today's woods and hybrids



● TAYLORMADE M1

► The saved weight from the lightweight carbon-composite crown is relocated into two sliding weights in the sole that control your left or right misses.

● CALLAWAY GREAT BIG BERTHA

► The advanced steel in the face wraps around the top and bottom for maximum ball speed, and the larger size provides forgiveness.



● TOUR EDGE EXOTICS EX9

► Power comes from a face that wraps around the perimeter, an ultra-high-strength steel that gets as thin as a nickel, and a sloping, aerodynamic crown.

● MIZUNO JPX-EZ

► The special metal in the face, the larger size and wave-like sole combine for more distance on shots all across the clubface.

● COBRA KING LTD.

► Distance starts with the special-steel face, but a see-through sole plate and carbon-fibre crown shift mass low for higher launch and less spin.





● TAYLORMADE M1

► The high-strength face insert helps boost distance, and two meaty, movable weights in the sole – one is 25 grams – let you tweak direction.



● PARSONS XTREME GOLF 0317

► The hot metal in the face produces speed, and heavy tungsten weight screws in the sole help launch the ball high and control direction.

● TITLEIST 816H

► A special alloy face insert and a flexing channel in the sole rev the engine. Plus, there are two models, nine total loft options and a 16-way hosel to fit your distance gaps.

● CALLAWAY APEX

► Its iron-like blade length will appeal to better players, but anyone will like the benefits of a face that wraps over the top and bottom for more flex.

● SRIXON Z355

► Sure, the high-tech metal in the face launches shots faster, but the balance point of the lighter shaft and heavier head make the golfer's swing faster, too.





The Jones Boy

Matt Jones' working-class win at the Australian Open was as much a victory against himself as it was against the world's best player

HEROISM, as it relates to golf, takes different forms. Achillean, as per Tiger Woods' dramatic, one-legged interpretation on his way to victory at the 2008 US Open. Possibly Herculean, with reference to Greg Norman's second-round 63 in the British Open at Turnberry in 1986, a record score on a course set up described as one of the toughest in the history of Major championships.

And then there's just bog standard, working class, find-a-way-to-win heroism, such as that which Matt Jones exhibited in the final round of the 2015 Australian Open. While it won't be a championship remembered as an all-time great in terms of golf quality, it deserves an historical asterisk for one of the more unlikely recoveries in the history of professional golf in this country.

Few things are harder to recover from in a tournament than a mid-round implosion. Challenging for a championship on Sunday afternoon is akin to walking a tight rope. Confidence and composure are everything; losing balance, catastrophic. Jones's triple-bogey on the ninth hole in the final round was unstable and clumsy – the manner of it spoke of a man disconnected to the task, and burdened by the weight of expectation. For the next few holes, he looked all at sea, and



when he carved his tee shot right on 12 and then found himself in the greenside trap after three hits, it seemed a formality that his challenge was over.

Some may point to an element of luck, but in holing *that* bunker shot on 12, Jones found the ballast needed to right the sinking ship. The self doubt dissipated. A brilliant second into the par-5 14th from a difficult lie and stance resulted in a birdie, followed by another at 16 after a stunning approach on the brutal par 4 which reestablished his lead. Playing partner Jordan Spieth had a makeable eagle putt at the last to force a playoff, but when it slid left, Jones' remarkable

Sunday afternoon renaissance was complete.

Much had been made about the fact that Jones was once a member of the host venue. It was a factor he was pointed about downplaying, stating that the Australian Golf Club of 2015 was substantially different now to his junior days due to a recent redesign. However, while the green complexes have been altered, the routing is exactly the same. As almost every player in the field that week will tell you, the greatest advantage anyone can have at The Australian is knowledge about the wind variation and the way that it swirls around the Kensington bowl. The experience of

playing dozens of rounds in all conditions there was undoubtedly a significant factor for the eventual champion.

In coming out on top in a head-to-head battle with world No.1 Jordan Spieth, Jones showed that he was made of impressive stuff.

While a consistent earner on the US PGA Tour, he has only managed to find his way to the trophy ceremony on one prior occasion despite numerous opportunities. The manner in which he overcame the self doubt that has plagued him spoke of a career-turning point for the now world No.52, and of an inherent bravery common to champions and heroes.

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• Deborah Hutton – Publisher
balancebydeborahhutton.com.au

Nine, Wine and Dine

And other ideas we need to grow this great game

I RECENTLY had the privilege of interviewing legendary wedge designer Roger Cleveland – truly one of the nice guys of our game.

Roger pioneered breakthrough technology in wedges years ago with his brand, Cleveland Golf. Now working with Callaway Golf, the company invited him out to Australia to work with a team of PGA professionals and, at a celebratory dinner, I was asked to extract some pearls of wisdom from this very charming Californian gentleman. The conversation flowed and we started discussing dwindling memberships at golf clubs around the world and what can be done to help grow the game.

We all know the main reason fewer people are playing golf is that we live in a time-poor society. When you play a round of 18 holes, you're looking at an easy five hours – including the obligatory drink at the 19th.

Multitasking our way through the day, living our lives on smartphones, and only existing at warp-speed, it's hardly surprising few can afford the luxury of five hours on the course – particularly women. They're in the unenviable position of juggling work, screaming children and an empty fridge.

Roger was making a strong plea to the golf pros to encourage more nine-hole golf. He thinks it's the answer. Purists would no doubt disagree, but they're the ones who do prioritise their time for 18.

For busy people, if you halve the time required, you still get to swing a club in the sunshine and play more golf. We talked about the success of 'Nine, Wine and



Dine' – the perfect combination of playing in mixed company with a few casual wines and bite to follow. What's not to love about that?

I love to engage women I meet in conversations around golf: Do they play? Why, or why not? What do they love about it and what turns them away?

The time factor is an obvious one, but what other obstacles are there? I'm a strong supporter of this game for women, as I think the benefits from playing are worth the sacrifice of a freeing up a few hours. For a number of reasons – you open up your circles of people, creating new friendships around a sport you love, away from the pressures of family and work.

You get to turn that damn phone off, escape being on-call

and enjoy some much-needed 'you' time. There are very few occasions in life that require you to turn off your technology, so I advise you to run with this one. And if you are indeed working, there is no better way of networking than spending a few quality hours with potential clients, walking green fairways that are free of interruptions.

There are quite a few clubs in this industry that need to come up with fresh, new initiatives to maintain the drive for serious golfers, while also create more fun for beginners. The amount of maturing single men and women looking for some company is on the rise, so why aren't there more social activities organised where they get to hang out, relax and play 'a-round', all in the comfort and safety of their local course?

I do some work for YourGolfPro, which introduces women to the game through free ladies clinics. They get to spend a friendly hour with other women, learn a new skill and, in doing so, remove any preconceived ideas that this is a sport dominated by men.

Why should the guys have all the fun? At some point, women have to wise up – this is a great game for life. When you put a few hours into it and build some skills, golf will hold you in good company for many years. When we do have more time for that thing called 'leisure' I could think of nothing I'd want to do more than travel the world with my partner, with clubs in hand playing on beautiful golf courses.

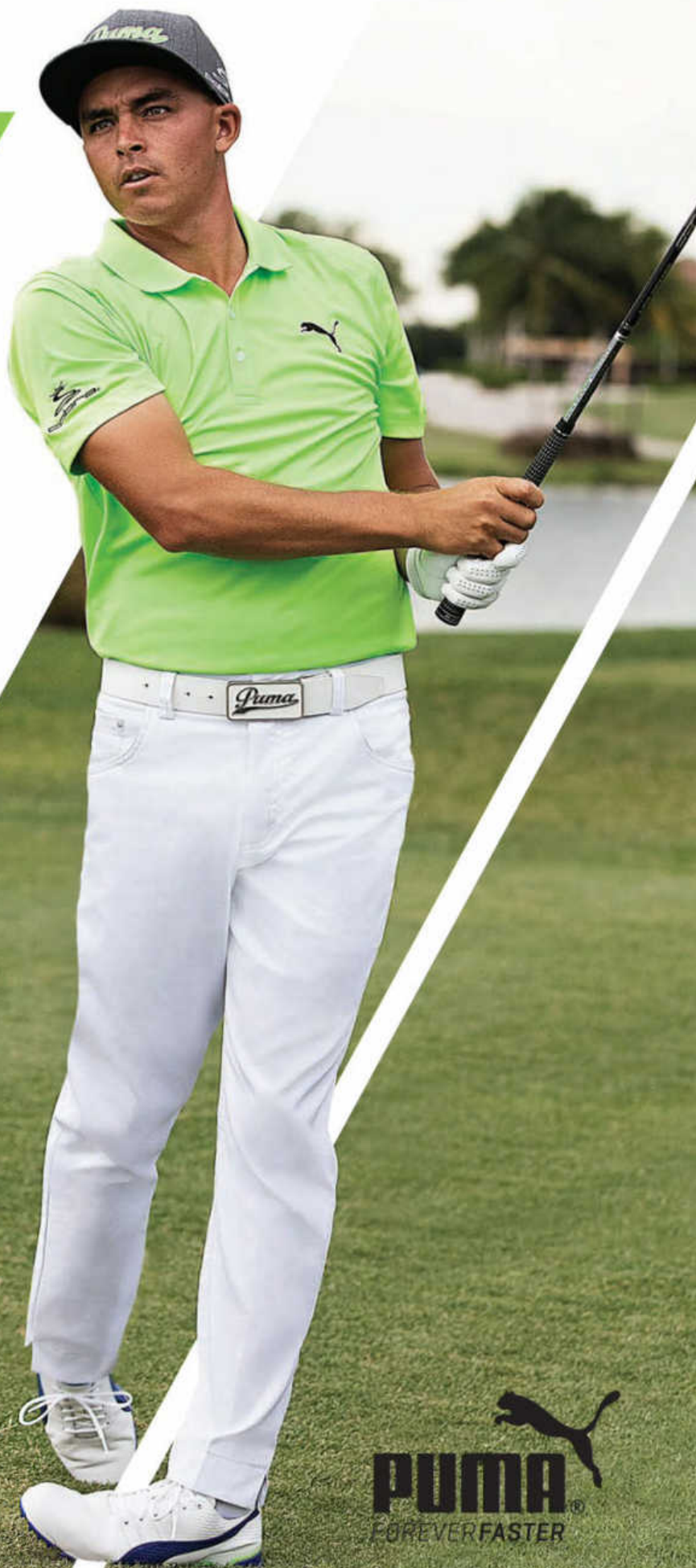
So ladies, gents and directors of golf: wise up, rise up and let's get this game on the road.

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Mountain Golf

This year's National Foursomes competitors are in for a stunning treat at Wanaka Golf Club

WANAKA Golf Club is set to welcome back the New Zealand Amateur Mixed Foursomes for the second consecutive year in October.

The tournament attracts players of all abilities from both sides of the Tasman, with flights and plates for each of the multiple divisions. Past winners of this championship include professionals Grant Waite and Brenda Ormsby, as well as high-profile amateur Kaye Maxwell and current golf manager of New Zealand Golf, Phil Aickin.

An array of district representatives have excelled at the tournament since it began in 1973, including current titleholder Claire Hunter, who won the 2015 event in partnership with her husband, Grant Dooley.

Originally, the event was a joint collaboration between the then NZGA and NZLGU – now amalgamated as New Zealand Golf. A fresh approach in recent times, under management by PaR nz Golfing Holidays, has revived interest in the event and added to players' enjoyment. The tournament is now held over the New Zealand Labour Weekend in late October, and dates are locked in for October 22-23, 2016.

Last year, the field of players was split into divisions of eight pairs, competing in foursomes matchplay, with the top division competing in a scratch event.

Many 2015 competitors reported back on the great time they had at this southern gem. They appreciated touches such as the welcoming happy hour, the breakfast pre-round on the



first day of competition, and a lunch to complement the last day's awards and prize-giving ceremony.

Though sometimes in the shadow of nearby Queenstown golfing beauties such as The Hills, Jack's Point and Millbrook, the Wanaka course's challenges and vistas are right up there for visiting national and international golfers. The club [pictured] has hosted several national golf events, including the New Zealand Men's Seniors in 2009. The golf club was formed in 1922 on a site lower than its present layout, which dates back to the late 1960s. Two nines, split over two sides of Ballantyne Road, were fully opened for play to make up a championship, 18-hole course.

The first nine holes were based around Faulks Terrace and Stone Street, which have elevated perspectives and provide panoramic views over the township and lake towards Mt Aspiring. The back nine, the second stage to be opened, is situated on former Wanaka Station land. This section is more park-like with views of Mt Iron, Mt Gold and Cardrona Valley.

The club is in a healthy

financial position with more than 950 members – not bad for a town with a population of 7,400.

A picturesque setting at the southern end of Lake Wanaka, along with its historic roots in the 19th century gold rush era, makes Wanaka a popular year-round holiday destination. The town is still growing, much like nearby Queenstown, which is only a 45-minute drive away. The population of the greater Queenstown lakes district, of which Wanaka is part, has grown by 50 per cent during the past 10 years.

Wanaka is also known for its easy access to the Mount Aspiring National Park – part of a World Heritage Area – and its proximity to the headwaters of the South Island's longest river, the Clutha. The biennial Warbirds Over Wanaka air show and Rippon Festival of New Zealand music regularly draw thousands of national and international visitors to the region, and the town is also credited with being the first place to host sheepdog trials.

Wanaka is one of the few areas in New Zealand with a near-continental climate, with four distinct seasons that provide



colour and contrast for returning golfers. For relaxation off the course, golfers can test their sense of direction in the maze at Puzzling World, or settle back at the Cinema Paradiso, styled in a classic layout with old couches and an in-theatre Morris Minor. The nearby Cardrona ski field has one of the world's few Olympic-sized half-pipes, making it a popular training site for some of the best international snow sports athletes. Entry forms for the 2016 New Zealand Amateur Mixed Foursomes will be available shortly on nzgolf.org.nz and parnz.co.nz with an easy online registration.

Denise Langdon is the Director of PaR nz Golfing Holidays, based in Auckland.

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Tender Mercy

Relieve elbow pain with these simple steps

TENDONS connect muscles to bones, and when you do things like put a death grip on a golf club and hit an entire pyramid of range balls, the muscles around your elbows often become bruised or torn.

The acute pain you feel on the inside (golfer's elbow) or outside (tennis elbow) of the joint "is a very common problem for golfers," says AUSTRALIAN GOLF DIGEST fitness advisor Dr Ara Suppiah. The following are his recommendations for treatment and rehabilitation.

► TREATMENTS

Reduce the pain by icing the area for 20 minutes every so often during the first few days while taking doctor-approved, anti-inflammatory drugs like naproxen sodium (Aleve), Suppiah says. Wearing a compression sleeve or brace can increase blood flow and healing agents to the area.

Some braces are even designed for sleeping. "Go easy on that arm for a few weeks," Suppiah says. "Avoid lifting heavy objects, playing golf, etc. The pain is a reminder to take a break."

If the pain doesn't subside after a few weeks, consider a corticosteroids injection. It's very effective for pain management

and is usually covered by health insurance. Still, you should have no more than three in a lifetime. "Too many can cause tissue damage," Suppiah says.

Other treatments to consider are low-intensity ultrasound therapy (think of it as an internal massage of an inflamed joint) or platelet-rich plasma

injections, Suppiah says. For PRP, blood is drawn and spun in a centrifuge until platelets (which contain healing agents) are concentrated. They are then injected back into the elbow. Neither is typically covered by insurance, Suppiah says, and both can be expensive.

"PRP is more effective, but you usually need three shots and six weeks to recover," he says.

Another radical procedure for tendinitis is Topaz. A needle emitting radio waves is injected into the tendon, creating small traumas that prompt healing agents into the area – like a jump-start for the natural recovery process.

There has yet to be any scientific study confirming that Topaz works for elbow tendinitis, only anecdotally based endorsements from doctors, Suppiah says.

"The last resort is surgery, an arthroscopic tendon release," Suppiah says.

"But it might be necessary if you suffer from repeated issues with the tendons – tendinosis – and nothing else works."

—RON KASPRISKE

THE ELBOW MIRACLE WORKER Physical therapist Tim Tyler developed exercises that have proved in clinical trials to be effective in the treatment and prevention of elbow tendinitis. He calls them the Tyler Twist (for tennis elbow) and Reverse Tyler Twist (for golfer's elbow). You'll need a resistance band and should do 15 reps/three sets of either exercise daily. Follow along with the sequences below.

TYLER TWIST	<p>1/ Hold the band vertically with the arm that has tennis elbow.</p>	<p>2/ Reach across and grab the bar with the other hand, palm facing outward.</p>	<p>3/ Keep the injured arm still and twist the bar clockwise with the top hand.</p>	<p>4/ Maintain the twist while extending the arms and turning the bar horizontally.</p>	<p>5/ Slowly untwist the bar using only the hand of the injured arm.</p>
REVERSE TYLER TWIST	<p>1/ Hold the band horizontally with the arm that has golfer's elbow.</p>	<p>2/ Reach over the top of the bar with the other hand. Grab and twist upward.</p>	<p>3/ Maintain the bar in a twisted state with both palms facing you.</p>	<p>4/ Extend both arms while maintaining a flexed wrist with the injured arm.</p>	<p>5/ Slowly untwist the bar with only the wrist and hand.</p>

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Flying privately all season is going to cost half a mil.



Undercover Tour Pro

When it makes sense to join the jet set

WHEN I fly commercial, I wear jeans and a hoodie. I won't shave, either, so when you first see me on the plane you might wonder, *Who is this homeless bloke sitting in first-class?* The only airport where I'm recognised with any frequency is my home regional, but it's nice there. People wave and say "Play well this week" if it's Tuesday morning, or "Welcome back" if it's a Monday or Saturday. Nobody's going to corner me and ask if I think Tiger is really done.

I've got a handful of wins on the US PGA Tour, which makes for a good situation: I'm not a household name, and only lifelong golf fans know me. I don't like being a jerk, but I can understand how a lot of top pros eventually become unapproachable. They can't walk 50 feet without getting

stopped. Everyone needs time for work, for family and just for themselves.

Because I spend so much time away from home, even 30 extra minutes here and there can feel precious. That's why I fly privately as much as I can. Sure, four grand or so per hour can seem absurd, but the difference between sleeping in my bed at home Sunday night after a tournament versus sitting through a commercial overnighter is priceless.

Flying privately all season, say 105 hours in the air, is going to cost half a million dollars. For a top-30 player, which means you're raking in at least \$6 million a year between prizemoney and endorsements, it's a no-brainer. Players in the tier below need to be a bit more judicious. If I can text around and find two, or, better,

three other golfers to split a jet, the cost to most destinations becomes about the same as a first-class ticket. Obviously, co-ordinating everyone's schedule can get complicated, but the tour has travel staff to help out. If you miss the cut Friday morning and want to hop on a flight that afternoon to West Palm Beach, you won't have a problem. Tons of pros live there. If you need to go to Phoenix or Dallas, fly commercial. There are so many direct flights that you'll get there in the same amount of time. So what if you can't have your favourite vintage on the way home? Playing better will solve that.

When I take my family, that's a crew of kids, my wife and usually my mother-in-law. The psychological toll of moving our circus through a crowded security line is no way to prepare for a tournament. And because I'd have to buy six tickets, it basically justifies the cost of going private. We just drive up to the tarmac, our bags are loaded right away, and boom, we're off.

A weird aspect of the tax law is, with fractional ownership of a jet, I can't write off the expense of taking my family. But if I owned the jet outright (which only the real megastars do, like Rory, Tiger, Phil, Ernie), I could write off the whole thing.

Speaking of accountants, I've had issues. One of my early guys cut corners, and he had to pay the penalties later on. It dragged out and was a nightmare. Now I have someone very conservative organise my tax return. I'm not good enough to play out here with those kinds of distractions.

And that's why I fly private, to cut down on distractions. Getting in the right frame of mind to compete against the best in the world is hard enough without having to deal with delays, lost bags, grubby food courts, other people's screaming children. Or the stranger seated next to me who asks why I missed that three-footer on TV.

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Jack Newton congratulates 2015 Celebrity Classic champion Rebecca Artis.

Caddywhacked at 'The Jack'

Aussie star Rebecca Artis ditches hubby bagman to claim celebrity title

G IRL power ran wild as Ladies European Tour player Rebecca Artis made it back-to-back wins for the women at the 2015 Jack Newton Celebrity Classic after discovering the secret to success was not having her husband by her side.

"I've found the key to winning is leaving the hubby in the clubhouse drinking beer, and caddying for myself," Artis said after going 5-under over her closing nine holes to leapfrog the experienced duo of Brendan Smith and James Nitties by two shots.

Artis' caddie-husband Geoff, who was on her bag when she won the 2015 Ladies Scottish Open, was busy sinking schooners as his wife ran riot on the final day, becoming the second woman in as many years to win 'The Jack' after Polly Goldman's 2014 heroics.

Making her victory even more unlikely was the fact Artis only landed in the country 6.30am on the Monday morning after returning from

European Tour duties in Dubai. She then embarked on a marathon 10-hour drive from Brisbane to the New South Wales Hunter Valley, eventually arriving at Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley 10.30pm on Monday night.

She teed off the following day with former Prime Minister Bob Hawke and didn't let two weather delays stop her from doing the unthinkable and beating a strong field of male tour pros.

Celebrity bragging rights were initially shared by three familiar names – TV star Gary Sweet, former AFL player Richard Champion and surfer Josh Constable. Champion eventually got the nod on a countback.

As expected, 86-year-old event patron Hawke stole the show with his traditional rendition of Waltzing Matilda, while TV hot-shot Lincoln Lewis and ALPG Tour player Skye Choueiri won 'best dressed' for their colourful superheroes attire. Can the girls now make it a hat-trick in 2016?

The Newton family get into the spirit at 'The Jack'



Comedian Adam Spencer with Jack Newton



Former Prime Minister
Bob Hawke



Comedian Jimeoin



Colourful ALPG pro Skye Choueiri



Aussie tour pro
Brendan Jones



Television star
Lincoln Lewis



ALPG 'superwoman'
Carly Beck in full swing



What's Hot

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TITLEIST 716 AP1 AND AP2 IRONS

New 716 AP1 is the longest, most forgiving Titleist iron ever, designed for golfers seeking maximum distance and maximum forgiveness. The extreme 360° undercut cavity design creates a large thin unsupported face, delivering speed and launch for more distance, while the high-density tungsten weighting provides maximum forgiveness. SRP Steel: \$165 per club; Graphite: \$205 per club

New 716 AP2 is Titleist's most advanced players' iron, made even better, delivering tour-proven distance with forgiveness and solid forged feel. High density tungsten weighting is used to position the centre of gravity low and perfectly aligned at impact for more speed, while at the same time increasing MOI for greater forgiveness and consistent distance. SRP Steel: \$225 per club; Graphite: \$265 per club
See Titleist.com.au for more



PUMA TITANTOUR IGNITE GOLF SHOES

Titantour is back with game changing updates that will have your feet begging you to get out on the course. Featuring the new IGNITE foam – a revolutionary material that provides higher energy return than any other golf shoe, superior step-in comfort and stable cushioning – plus PWRCOOL technology powered by Outlast to absorb, store and release heat for optimal thermal comfort; and Puma Golf's new Epic Performance Last; this shoe will provide you with ultimate comfort, fit and performance that you didn't even think was possible.

Titantour Ignite is made from premium materials; including a full-grain leather upper, heavy gauge thread and a dual density TPU outsole, providing long lasting quality and durability.

Add to that a 60-day comfort guarantee and two-year waterproof guarantee, this shoe is definitively a winner. RRP: 189.95 See cobragolf.com.au for more

CALLAWAY MD3 MILLED WEDGES

The new **MD3 Milled Wedge** line is Callaway's most complete wedge range ever, featuring three unique grinds to provide the versatility you need to get up and down from any lie. The W-Grind is ideal for golfers with a steep attack angle and is great for bunker play. The versatile S-Grind is suited for all conditions, shot types and attack angles. For golfers with a sweeping attack angle or play in firmer conditions, the C-Grind is the wedge for you. All grinds feature Callaway's Progressive Groove Optimisation, which controls spin as you go up in loft for a smoother spin transition from your irons to wedges. RRP: \$219.99

See callawaygolf.com.au for more





FOOTJOY THE NEW D.N.A

The new generation of **D.N.A.** – DryJoys Next Advancement delivers another feature packed performance shoe for competitive golfers. D.N.A. footwear embodies the most proven elements of the world-renown DryJoys franchise with cutting-edge design and construction methodology, now with new TOURLOCK cleats for increased traction. FootJoy offers narrow, medium and wide shoe widths in addition to the 7-14 size options so that amateur golfers can get the Professional fit and feel. SRP: \$309.95 with BOA; \$279.95 with lace. See Footjoy.com.au for more

TITLEIST 816H HYBRIDS

The new **Titleist 816H1** and **816H2** models utilise Active Recoil Channel and Ultra Thin Face technology to generate high speed and low spin for long distance. A high MOI design increases speed across the face for more forgiveness on off-centre hits, while the optimised centre of gravity increases launch and trajectory for more shot-stopping control.

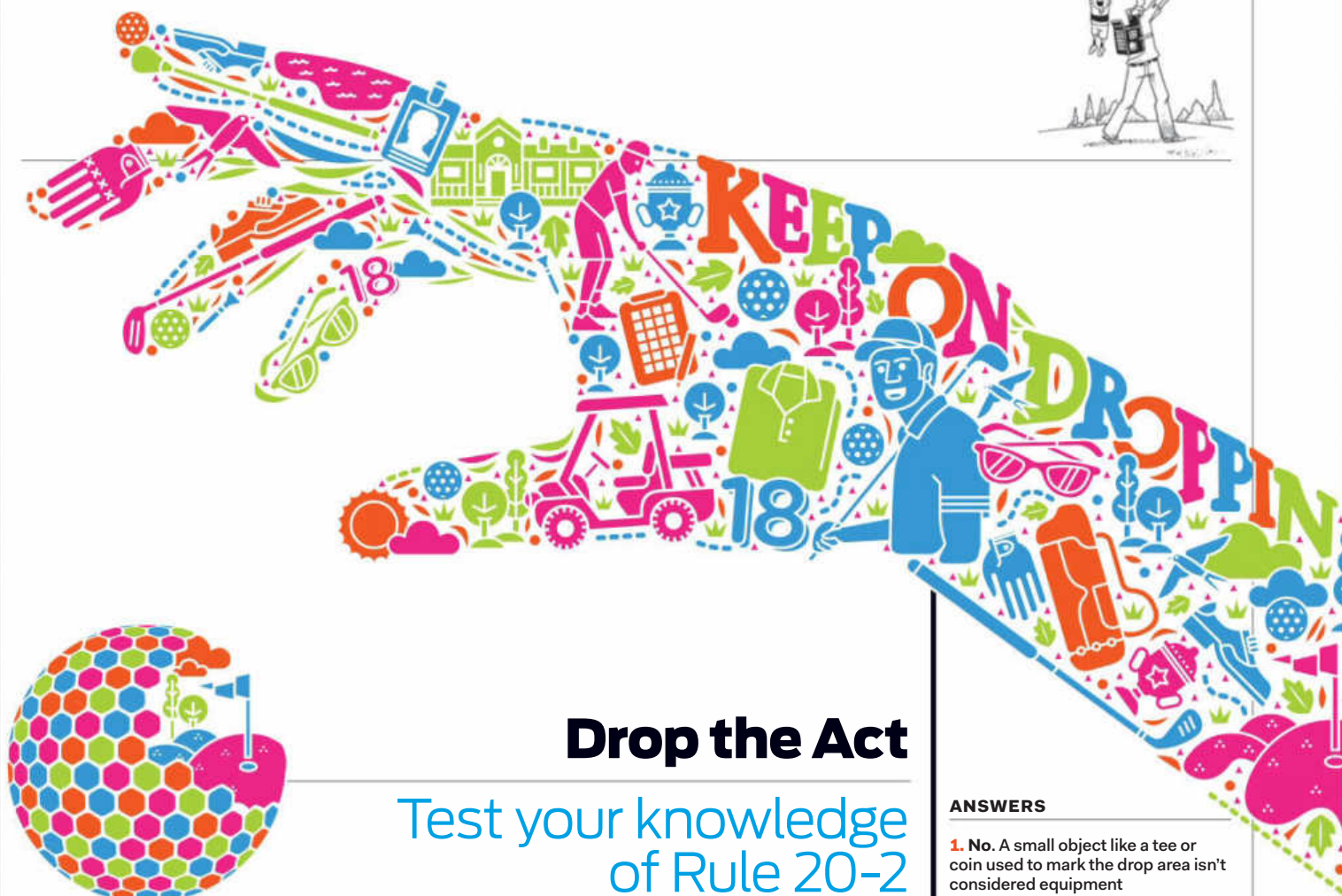
816H1 has a larger profile that provides confidence, with slightly increased face progression that performs well from the rough.

816H2 hybrids have a more compact shape with a slight offset for iron-like shot control for players who engage the turf more aggressively. SRP \$369. See Titleist.com.au for more



TITLEIST 716 T-MB UTILITY IRONS

New **Titleist 716 T-MB** features a high-tech muscle back frame with a thin, fast, unsupported face that increases speed and launch for more distance. Extreme high density tungsten weighting inside the body is used to drive the centre of gravity low and deep, allowing for stronger lofts. The result is high **launch**, low spin and high speed for increased carry **distance**. T-MB's construction allows for maximum use of high density tungsten – an average of **80 grams** per head, the most of any Titleist iron – providing a powerful combination of high launch and **forgiveness** with a playable trajectory. Titleist **716 T-MB** SRP Steel: \$309 per club; Graphite: \$349 per club. Visit Titleist.com.au for more



Drop the Act

Test your knowledge of Rule 20-2



1

You place a tee in the ground to help mark the area where you intend to drop and then let the ball fall. The ball lands and stops in the drop area, but not before skimming the tee. Should you re-drop?

2

Watching your opponent take a drop, you see he holds the ball at shoulder height but flicks his wrist as he lets the ball fall, putting extra spin on it. If you call him out for doing that, can he correct the mistake without penalty?

3

Before taking a drop, you grab another ball from your bag and drop it to see what the outcome might be when it's time to do it for real. Is this allowed?

4

A bush within the proper drop area catches your ball on the way down, and the ball gets stuck in its branches without ever touching the ground. Re-drop?

5

You drop a ball near the edge of a bunker, and it rolls in. Re-drop?

6

As long as you extend your arm and let the ball fall from your hand, does it matter how high you position your arm?

7

Your opponent attempts to drop within two club-lengths of a lateral water hazard. The ball rolls into

the hazard, requiring him to re-drop. Instead of doing that, can he choose another relief option – such as returning to the spot of his previous stroke?

8

A course enacted a Local Rule allowing for a drop zone on its island par 3. You choose to use the zone after plunking one in the water. You drop your ball, and it hits inside the zone but rolls away from the hole two inches outside the zone. Re-drop?

9

You realise your ball will be lost forever in a water hazard after taking a drop outside the hazard but on the slope of its bank. Can you drop the ball and stop it from going into the water as long as you wait until after it crosses the margin of the hazard?

ANSWERS

- 1. No.** A small object like a tee or coin used to mark the drop area isn't considered equipment (DEFINITIONS). If it were on the ground for another reason and the ball struck it, you would need to re-drop.
- 2. Yes.** If he doesn't re-drop properly, it's a one-shot penalty (DECISION 20-2a/2).
- 3. No.** It's contrary to the purpose and spirit of the rules (RULE 1-4). Penalty is loss of hole in matchplay or two shots in strokeplay (DECISION 20-2a/8).
- 4. No.** The ball was in play when it struck the course within the proper area (DECISION 20-2b/1).
- 5. Yes,** even if the ball didn't roll any farther than the prescribed distance, such as two club-lengths (RULE 20-2c(i)).
- 6. Yes.** Your arm needs to be at shoulder height (RULE 20-2a).
- 7. No.** Once he dropped correctly under an applicable rule (26-1c), if a re-drop is required, the other options are no longer permitted (DECISION 20-2c/5).
- 8. No.** The ball does not have to rest in the zone (APPENDIX 1-A-6).
- 9. Yes** (DECISION 20-2c/4). If a ball rolls to a place where a re-drop is required (e.g., a hazard), you can grab it before it stops, provided it's likely it would not leave that area.



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Golf

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TALK about being a late bloomer. Thongchai Jaidee didn't pick up a golf club until he was 16. Then his progress in the game was put on hold while he served in the Thai Army as a special-forces paratrooper.

Towards the end of his military service, Jaidee started honing his game at a course on an army base, but he remained an amateur until age 30.

Over the next 15 years – and for the past 10 with German swing instructor Peter Wolfenstetter – Jaidee had good success on the European Tour, winning seven times, most recently at the Porsche European Open in September last year. He also is the all-time money leader on the Asian Tour, with 13 titles, and the first Thai golfer to play in all four Majors, win \$5 million on the Asian Tour and

compete in the Presidents Cup, in which he went 1-1-1 in October.


Small in size, Jaidee relies on accuracy and a competitive spirit to keep up with other leading players. He has consistently ranked top 50 in the world the past three years. "He's small but very strong, due to his time in the army," says Wolfenstetter, who highlights Jaidee's swing below.




Thongchai Jaidee

Thailand's little big man plays large


SITTING BULL

 Thongchai Jaidee might weigh less than 64 kilograms, but his athletic setup (springy knees, poised arms) promotes power and accuracy. "He's balanced and stable, with his upper body tilted to the right," says his teacher, Peter Wolfenstetter. "He's set to swing up on the ball at impact, and that's good for the driver."

MAINTAIN STABILITY

 Starting back and well into the swing, Jaidee's right leg is a pillar of stability and balance. "It has barely moved from address," Wolfenstetter says. "Thongchai starts bending the right elbow here, which leads to a good shoulder turn." He cocks his head to his right, à la Jack Nicklaus, which helps him turn all the way back.

TURN, BABY, TURN!

 At the top, Jaidee demonstrates why he has become a powerful and straight driver. Note the full shoulder turn against the solid hips, which have hardly moved. "He sometimes leaves some shots out to the right, and we are working on that," Wolfenstetter says. "I want to see his left wrist flatter to help him hit it straighter."

► GREENS IN REGULATION

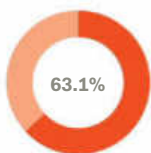


Thongchai Jaidee (82nd)

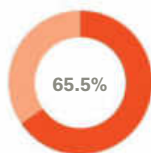


Henrik Stenson (1st)

► SCRAMBLING



Thongchai Jaidee (8th)



Alex Noren (1st)

► PUTTS PER ROUND



Thongchai Jaidee (7th)



Richard T. Lee (1st)

SOURCE: EUROPEAN TOUR



SQUAT FOR SPEED

Just as Jaidee's right leg created stability going back, his left leg does the same coming through. "Thongchai shifts his weight to his left side and keeps his left leg stable and balanced," Wolfenstetter says. "His right elbow starts going down in front of his body, and his left arm straightens, creating a full radius."

POWERING THROUGH

Jaidee stays grounded at impact. As his hips turn through, his upper body, especially his head, stays back, creating an upward launch. "His left wrist is flat and his right arm has straightened," Wolfenstetter says. "His right hand is in a hitting position, controlling the face. The clubface is the king in this game."

FREE RELEASE

Past impact and into the finish, the left leg is Jaidee's swing stabiliser. It finally snaps straight through impact. "He can rip it because his head is in the same position it was in the setup," Wolfenstetter says. "Both arms and hands release against the left side, and he makes a powerful body rotation to the finish."

PRO-FILE

THONGCHAI JAIDEE
46 / 173cm / 63 kilograms
Lopburi, Thailand

DRIVER
Titleist 915D2
9.5 degrees

BALL
Titleist Pro V1x

★ OAKLEY shirt, pants, belt
ECCO shoes
TITLEIST visor, glove



AGEING

GRACEFULLY

Like the fruit-laden vines that border its fairways, The Vintage Golf Club just gets better with every season. **By The Editors**





SOME people meditate to relax. Others prefer yoga. An alternative method we discovered is swinging by The Vintage in the New South Wales Hunter Valley, for it is here that your heart rate drops, the wine cork pops and the good times (and putts) roll.

There's something to be said about a course that welcomes you with open arms. In a world where attracting clientele to your course is an ongoing battle, the friendly folk at The Vintage are onto a winner.

Despite being a prestigious Greg Norman-designed layout ranked No.45 in the country, knee-high socks and rule Nazis hold no place at this 18-hole championship course. Instead, they are replaced with young kids having the time of their lives outside on the club's endless lawns, clinking wine glasses echoing off the clubhouse verandah and passing confetti showers blowing in from the onsite chapel where hundreds celebrate the most important day of their lives.

This is indeed a club that caters for everyone, yet does so without losing its true and original identity, that being one of the country's premier resort golf courses.

Vintage Norman from the first tee

Greg Norman doesn't mess around. He wanted you to know this was his work before you even push your tee into the ground on the short par-4 first hole. A quick glance towards the green reveals an intimidating tree in the middle of the fairway. It's a classic Norman-design trademark, put there to toy with your mind, urge you to club up and go over, instead of around.

‘Architecturally, the highlight of the round arrives at hole No.8 [*above*], the 194m par 3 that's rated by legendary club pro Richard Mercer as one of the finest par 3s in the world’

It's one of a collection of holes on the opening nine that give you the true Vintage experience – short, strategic par 4s, intimidating par 3s and a reachable par 5, all of which are dressed with superb bunkering, tight couch fairways and the best greens in the region on their day.

The par-4 second, another short hole with a sharp dogleg to the right, demands two accurate iron shots to a funky green sandwiched in between thick forest. Two holes later it's another short dogleg, this time to the left, highlighted by an approach to an elevated green guarded by deep bunkering. The par-5 seventh takes you on a viticulture tour, up a steep hill from the tee and then down it all the way to a slippery left-to-right sloping green. Miss the fairway or green left and your ball could end up in the neighbouring winery's next 'vintage'.

Architecturally, the highlight of the round arrives at No.8, the 194m par 3 that's rated by legendary club pro Richard Mercer as one of the finest par 3s in the world. It's a beauty, if not a beast. The secret here is to not be too greedy – aim for the middle of the green, take the water on the right and bunkers left out of play, settle for two good putts and sprint to the next tee minus any damage to your scorecard or ego. Job done and a well earned halfway refreshment lay waiting just around the corner.

The back nine

The two standout features of The Vintage's closing nine are variety and course conditioning. Norman is economical in his spread of long, short, straight and doglegged holes, while there is a solid mixture of brutal and forgiving green complexes. Water hazards have also been used sparingly to good effect. Long hitters will thrive on the short and driveable par 4s, but will be forced to risk it all when going for the par 5s in two. The par 3s level the field as each of the two (12 and 17) have water in sight that demands solid iron strikes from every golfer.

The course conditioning should also be commended. Lush green couch fairways inspire confidence on approach shots, but are hard enough to provide sufficient run from the tee. The rugged bunkers are a signature of Norman's ethos – tall and intimidating but with an ideal amount of sand to reward solid strikes.

And you thought the golf was good...

If you haven't experienced The Legends Grill at The Vintage, you haven't indulged in the best the Hunter has to offer. Spearheaded by executive chef Tony Maher, the club restaurant can lay claim to being one of the best in the country, offering a specialty menu matched

with award winning Hunter Valley wines. Fresh oysters, scallops and pork belly are just a sample of the culinary delights on offer for your entrée, all inspired by local seasonal produce under the watchful eye of Maher. Then it's into the grill. Eye fillet, scotch fillet, T-bone, skewered lamb ... all matched with the best local drop. Sublime. Then it's off to the brand new whiskey lounge for a nightcap, or two. Relaxed yet?

Put your feet up

After a hard day's golf on Australia's No.45-ranked course, the Chateau Elan may be one of the most comfortable night's sleep you'll experience in any hotel. Each room at the Chateau Elan boasts a luxury bed designed by renowned Australian bedmaker A.H. Beard. Depending on your budget, there are several accommodation options. The Destination Spa complex has 20 spa suites, while next door there are three types of villas overlooking the 10th fairway. King rooms provide an open-plan bedroom, living space plus ensuite bathroom with spa bath. One-bedroom villas are larger, with separate bedroom, dining area and kitchen. King rooms and one-bedroom villas can also be co-joined to create two-bedroom villas for groups and families. All rooms have balconies or terraces overlooking the course and Hunter surrounds. Five spa suites have a screened sanctuary courtyard for guests who want absolute seclusion.

Love and marriage

The Château Élan may have three ceremony venues and two reception rooms in a picturesque Hunter setting, but there's a common theme among weddings here:

elegance. The popular choice for wedding ceremonies is the Carriage House, and for good reason – there's nothing quite like saying "I do" in a beautiful chapel constructed of sandstone blocks rescued from an 1834 Hunter Valley homestead. An outdoor garden wedding is just as charming, with the Fairway option allowing happy couples to walk down a path of rose petals onto manicured greens beside The Vintage's 18th tee, while the Summerhouse gazebo provides a gentle amphitheatre beside the 10th tee – and truly spectacular backdrop. The Vintage's wedding team will provide a special reception in either the Barrington or Founders rooms.

Business mixed with pleasure

Corporate or social golf groups are a specialty

at The Vintage, whose friendly staff is on hand to professionally manage your day from start to finish. The dedicated golf group coordinator will take care of all your requirements and preparations for the day, as well as signage, food and beverage requirements. They'll even organise awards. Function rooms, with menus tailored to suit your requirements, are on hand for conferences and meetings, all just seconds from the first tee. 

THE DETAILS

The Vintage & Chateau Elan
Vintage Drive, Rothbury, NSW 2320
Pro shop open 7 days a week from
7am to 6pm.

For booking enquiries, call (02) 4998 2208
or email golf@thevintage.com.au



EXCLUSIVE



THEN *and* NOW

Rory McIlroy was a 17-year-old amateur when he first played in Australia. Nearly a decade on, he sits down with AUSTRALIAN GOLF DIGEST to reflect on his meteoric rise, how visits Down Under have helped his career – and when he plans to return. **By Evin Priest**



C

HANGE is a concept Rory McIlroy has become accustomed to.

Just remind him of his 72-hole total from his Australian Open debut at Royal Sydney in 2006.

"Was I really *that* much over par!?"

Yes, Rory. You shot 74-74-76-77 for a 13-over total. You finished in a tie for 59th.

"The conditions must have been tough," McIlroy laughs.

"I'm sure I tried to birdie the hardest holes and probably took on every difficult pin – regardless of the hazards."

Ten years have passed since that first visit to Australia. From golf equipment to personal wealth, bodyfat percentage to Major victories, a lot has changed for Rory McIlroy. And though it's difficult to imagine a time when the former world No.1 (and No.3 at the time of writing) wasn't an international superstar, the man himself has no trouble.

"In 2006, not a soul in the world knew who I was," the Northern Irishman recalls about his maiden voyage to Sydney.

Then 17, McIlroy sported long, black curly



locks and didn't possess the chiselled frame now regularly splashed across covers of men's fitness magazines.

But that isn't why Australian golf fans didn't recognise a teenage amateur from Holywood, Belfast.

Firstly, he was worth approximately \$600 million less than he is now. He hadn't won four Major championships, 11 US PGA Tour

titles and 12 European Tour events. He hadn't become engaged (and later separated) to Danish tennis star Caroline Wozniacki, and he was still several months away from claiming low-amateur honours at the 2007 British Open at Carnoustie.

Yet it didn't stop Australians lending themselves to McIlroy, who hasn't forgotten the hospitality he was shown in Sydney.



‘My 2016 schedule is completely jammed, but after that I’d like to start thinking about the Australian Open again. Aussie Open courses are among the best in the world to play’

“Even back in 2006, I was made to feel really welcome and I felt very relaxed on and off the course,” he says.

“I could dwell on the golf, the amazing sights and the great atmosphere in Sydney, but what keeps me coming back is the welcome I always receive. There’s absolutely no doubt I’ll be back in Australia in the near future.”

And it isn’t hard to see why the two-time US PGA Tour Player of the Year loves competing in our national championship following his dramatic victory in 2013, where he partnered Adam Scott in the final group before eventually denying him a rare Aussie triple crown.

Although the 26-year-old admits he didn’t like to win by virtue of then-green jacket holder Scott bogeying Royal Sydney’s 18th, lifting the Stonehaven Cup catapulted McIlroy to his best year on the course.

“It’s safe to say that my win at Royal Sydney was the high point of 2013,” says McIlroy.

“It gave me a lot of confidence and belief going into the 2014 season. I was able to concentrate on the strong and positive parts of my game and apply these as the year progressed.”

The triumph followed a tumultuous

period for McIlroy, during which he appeared to struggle adapting to Nike equipment after leaving long-time sponsor Titleist. He failed to register a win on the US PGA Tour and sensationally withdrew from the Honda Classic.

The only highlight of his Major season was a top-10 finish at the US PGA Championship, among mediocre finishes at The Masters (T25) and US Open (T41), as well as a missed cut at the British Open.

But with the Nike equipment – and the pressure of its reported \$US200 million, 10-year endorsement deal – under control, McIlroy had a career-defining season in 2014. He finished inside the top-10 in 12 of the 17 US PGA Tour events he entered, claimed his first WGC title and returned to the world No.1 ranking.

He won the US PGA Championship at Valhalla, but it was his British Open triumph at Royal Liverpool that was McIlroy’s personal highlight – not just for the year, but his entire career.

“The 2011 US Open elevated me into golf’s record books, but what stands out for me still is my Open Championship win at Hoylake,” says McIlroy.

“The Open Championship is my home

Major, so winning it, with my mum walking out to the 18th green to congratulate me, was very special.”

Months later, McIlroy returned to Sydney to defend his Australian Open title as the odds-on favourite, following a truly sensational year on the course.

But he was forced to watch as golf’s new kid on the block – Jordan Spieth – cruised to a six-shot win at The Australian Golf Club, before claiming the first two Majors of 2015.

Knowing how valuable a win Down Under can be for confidence and schedule momentum, McIlroy revealed exclusively to AUSTRALIAN GOLF DIGEST he is eager to return to the Australian Open, possibly as early as 2017.

“I feel I’m missing a great event when I don’t get to play the Australian Open,” says McIlroy.

“My 2016 schedule is completely jammed, but after that I’d like to start thinking about the Australian Open again.

“I’ve said it many times before – Australian Open courses are simply among the best in the world to play.

“They are also, without exception, tough but fair and I think I enjoy them because they can feel a lot like (British) links courses.”

‘The Open Championship is my home Major. Winning it, with my mum walking out to (Hoylake's) 18th green to congratulate me, was very special,’



Green Jacket Dreams

McIlroy entered the lobby of golf legends with three out of the four Major trophies following his Claret Jug victory at Hoylake.

But the day McIlroy finally wins Augusta National's coveted green jacket, he will join a very special club in golf's history, in which the only members are Gene Sarazen, Ben Hogan, Gary Player, Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods.

"A career Grand Slam would be a great achievement, but it will only come if I remain patient and take each Major as it comes."

It would be sentimental for a number of reasons. Firstly, McIlroy would become the first golfer from Northern Ireland to win The Masters. Perhaps more importantly, however, the scar tissue from his meltdown in 2011 – where he started the final round with a four-shot lead but crashed out with a disastrous 80 – would be completely healed. Although he earned redemption two months later by setting 11 US Open scoring records during his eight-shot victory at Congressional, McIlroy still yearns

for the green jacket. "The Masters is the one remaining Major I've yet to claim, (so) it is really important for me to win," says McIlroy.

"I'm keen to have my own green jacket, (but) I don't feel there's any great urgency; my record at Augusta is very good – lone fourth last year was my best finish – and I've got plenty of years ahead of me to secure a Masters win."

The Year Of Rory

Although the charismatic superstar preaches patience, this year is going to be one of his biggest – on and off the course.

"2016 is definitely going to be a significant golfing year for me," says McIlroy. "I'm very keen to bag a Major or two, get my hands on an Olympic Gold (medal) and be on the winning Ryder Cup side."

"So I must be careful to pace myself throughout the year and be fully fit – mentally and physically – to give myself the best chance to compete."

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RORY MCILROY ON:

THE PERKS OF THE JOB: “There are lots of great perks, such as getting to travel where and when I want and have my parents at events. But I consider myself very lucky – at this stage in my career – to be able to give something back. I started my Rory Foundation a couple of years ago and rarely do I enjoy a better feeling than seeing some of the great work being done by children’s charities I support.”

TIGER WOODS’ PURSUIT OF JACK NICKLAUS’ RECORD 18 MAJORS: “I don’t think I’m really one for setting career goals. It works for some, and may motivate them to have solid targets or another’s career achievements to follow. For me, golf’s just such a long career – possibly 20 years or more these days – that I can’t imagine what I’d like to achieve by the end of it. My intention is to try and stay fit, adapt with golf’s ever-

evolving technology and keep putting a few trophies in the cabinet each year.”

WHEN AN ELITE PROFESSIONAL GOLF CAREER BECAME A REALITY: “My Silver Medal for leading amateur at the 2007 Open Championship at Carnoustie was the highlight of my amateur career. I was 17 and beginning to seriously believe I could hold my own with the best in the game.”

Add in a potential wedding and it is going to be a whirlwind 12 months. In December, speculation was rife McIlroy had proposed to girlfriend Erica Stoll – a former PGA of America employee – during a getaway to Paris. It was confirmed when Stoll was photographed with an engagement ring on her left hand at a fundraiser with McIlroy.

An Old Head On Young Shoulders

For a child prodigy so used to success, McIlroy’s handling of adversity has many predicting a career with longevity; certainly one that will deliver more Majors. From his capitulation at Augusta nearly five years ago, to a troublesome year in 2013, McIlroy has passed tests of his resolve with flying colours.

“We all need to learn from wild over-par scores, losses and disappointments,” he says. “How would we improve otherwise?”

Since his first significant win at the world under-10s championship in Florida, McIlroy knew every time he teed up in a tournament that winning was a probable outcome, as long as he prepared. “I’d worked very hard as a kid, and to win the world under-10s was wonderful for my self-belief and confidence.”

So when it came time for a golfer who had won every major amateur event in Ireland and Europe to play in Australia for the first time, McIlroy probably thought his only challenger would be then reigning US Open champion Geoff Ogilvy.

The Junior Ryder Cup winner wouldn’t have pictured himself finishing 21 shots adrift of eventual champion John Senden.

But would McIlroy change a thing? What advice would he give to that 17-year-old with his shoulders slouched in the scoring hut at Royal Sydney?

“Go out and do exactly the same thing.”





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Important Information

You must be a Qantas Frequent Flyer member to earn and redeem Qantas Points. Annual membership fee of \$249 may apply for Premium membership. Membership and earning Qantas Points are subject to Qantas Golf Club terms and conditions available at qantasgolfclub.com/terms-and-conditions and Qantas Frequent Flyer terms and conditions available at qantas.com.au/fflyer/dyn/program/terms. Free members could earn 1 Qantas Point per dollar and Premium members could earn 3 Qantas Points per dollar spent on goods and services offered for sale through qantasgolfclub.com. ~The 2016 Qantas Golf Club Challenge Qualifying Events are subject to the tournament rules and regulations, of each event.

WIN YOUR WAY TO NEW ZEALAND IN 2016

With the Qantas Golf Club Challenge*, you'll have the chance to play some of Australia's best courses. Take out top honours in any of our one-day events and you'll enjoy an all expenses paid trip to the Final in New Zealand*.

2016 Challenge Events

FEB 04 The Lakes Sydney	FEB 22 The Grange Adelaide	MAR 04 Noosa Springs Sunshine Coast	APR 11 Huntingdale Melbourne	APR 27 St. Michael's Sydney	MAY 23 Commonwealth Melbourne	JUN 27 Royal Queensland Brisbane
JUL 21 Concord Sydney	AUG 29 The Brisbane Golf Club Brisbane	SEP 05 Royal Adelaide Adelaide	SEP 21 Avondale Sydney	OCT 13 Manly Sydney	OCT 17 The Western Australian Perth	NOV 14 Yarra Yarra Melbourne

CLEARWATER GOLF COURSE, NEW ZEALAND

FREQUENT
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To be eligible to qualify for the 2016 Qantas Golf Club Challenge Final both players in a team must have a Golf Australia handicap. Check individual qualifying event terms and conditions available at qantasgolfclub.com/2016-challenge. *The prize includes entry to the 2016 Qantas Golf Club Challenge Final to be held at Clearwater Golf Resort, New Zealand from 23 to 26 November 2016, return economy flights from Australia, 3 nights accommodation at Peppers Clearwater Golf Resort, 2 rounds of golf at Clearwater Golf Course, green fees, daily breakfast and lunch, dinner on the first night and last night, polo shirt and cap and airport transfers.



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26 GREAT GOLF WEEKENDS

Planning your next short golf getaway? Stop searching – we’ve done the hard work for you. From the glorious vineyard-lined fairways of the Barossa Valley in South Australia to the spectacular coastal clifftops of Cape Kidnappers in New Zealand, here’s the first chapter of our guide to the best play-and-stay golf destinations just a short commute away.





There aren't too many more spectacular golf destinations than Queensland's Hamilton Island.

1. Mornington Peninsula, VIC

Arguably the most popular golf region in the country, the Mornington Peninsula is an easy pick on our list of recommended weekend golf holidays. The standard of every golf course along the Peninsula can't be ignored. A scenic one-hour drive along the new freeway from Melbourne's CBD, visitors can quickly escape the hustle and bustle for the serene peninsula life. From hot springs and amazing beaches to world-class cellar doors, gastro pubs and top-shelf restaurants, your time on the Peninsula will be spent in style. For the golfing purist, no visit to this region is complete without visits to The National, The Dunes, Sorrento, Eagle Ridge, Flinders and the newly named Bay Views Golf Club

(Rosebud) that has views across the entire Peninsula. A handful of courses even have their own onsite accommodation options, from resort-style rooms to self-contained apartments. Portsea, Moonah Links and Cape Schanck all have their own resorts, while St Andrews Beach has modern self-contained apartments that cater to all. To find out more about the region and options available, see golfmorningtonpeninsula.com.au for more.

2. Barossa Valley, SA

What more could you ask for in a weekend getaway? The Barossa Valley serves up fine wine, amazing food and challenging golf courses to complete the boutique weekend away. Surrounded by two of Australia's most recognised vineyards – Jacob's Creek and St Hallett – and adjacent to the Novotel Barossa Valley Resort, the Tanunda Pines Golf Club is an experience for all to enjoy, where pristine views, valleys and vineyards will play backdrop to your round. Sandy Creek Golf Club and the Barossa Valley Golf Club are two other quality courses to add to your itinerary. See tanundapines.com.au, novotelbarossa.com and barossa.com for more.

3. Murray River, VIC

Australia's most majestic and historically significant river, the mighty Murray should be high on your list when it comes to a weekend golf escape. The region, recently rated the No.1 golf destination in Australia, combines natural beauty and top-shelf golf with a vast array of accommodation options that attract visitors from across the globe. With two championship golf courses only five minutes apart – Black Bull Golf Club

and Yarrowonga Mulwala Resort – here is the ideal starting point for your Murray River escape. Black Bull Golf Club, designed by the legendary Peter Thomson and Ross Perrett, recently opened and boasts a brilliant 18-hole layout that's highlighted by some of the most pure greens outside the Melbourne sandbelt. Just up the road is Australia's largest public-access golf resort, Yarrowonga Mulwala Resort. With 45 great holes and superior resort-style accommodation, you won't want to leave when the weekend is up. Another Murray must-do is Murray Downs Resort on the Victoria-New South Wales border at Swan Hill. An outstanding golf course in its own right, it could also be the best-value play-and-stay experience in the region, with five-night packages advertised from \$525. For more information, see yarragolf.com.au, blackbullgc.com.au, murraydownsresort.com.au and visitvictoria.com/Regions/the-murray

4. Orange, NSW

One of the most underrated play-and-stay destinations in New South Wales, Orange will leave you green with envy with its sublime combination of food, wine and three scenic golf courses. Duntroon Golf Club is the undisputed hero of Orange golf, but Wentworth Golf Club and Orange Ex-Services' Country Club make this the ultimate weekend of golf in a region famous for its food and wine culture. Our tip for a unique getaway is to stay onsite at Duntroon's historic homestead and hit the many town restaurants and wine bars. Alternatively, Golf Orange's 'Grand Slam' play-and-stay package gives you three nights at Templers Mill Motel and rounds of golf on all three courses for under \$350. See golffororange.com.au for more.



5. Hamilton Island, QLD

Playing golf and exploring the Great Barrier Reef – does it get any better? Hamilton Island literally has it all and could be one of the most spectacular weekend getaways you ever book. Enjoy a wide selection of bars and restaurants, year-round cultural exhibitions and performances, watersports and, of course, arguably the country's most scenic golf course on Dent Island. In fact, Hamilton Island Golf Club is Australia's only 18-hole championship course on its own island. Throw in six different levels of accommodation to choose from across the island – ranging from plush, couples' suites, to family-friendly apartments and holiday homes, and Hamilton Island is the perfect base to see the Great Barrier Reef with a bit of spectacular golf on the side. See hamiltonisland.com.au for more.

6. Cape Kidnappers, NZ

The Farm at Cape Kidnappers is located on New Zealand's North Island in the heart of Hawkes Bay's wine country. Set atop 6,000 rolling acres with views to the Pacific Ocean, the 24-suite lodge offers "farm-luxe" at its finest. Fabulous food and wine are a given, with seasonal produce sourced from the farm's own garden. Then there's the Tom Doak-designed, world-acclaimed golf course, spa, and a spectacular 4-bedroom owner's cottage that cap off this truly unique lodge experience. Cape Kidnappers is just a 60-minute flight from Auckland and every suite offers its own private balcony with spectacular ocean views. See capekidnappers.com for more.

7. King Island, TAS

Perched in the middle of Bass Strait between Victoria and Tasmania's north-west coast is the most hyped new golf destination in the world. Surrounded by some of Australia's most beautiful beaches and rugged coastline, King Island is already synonymous for its export of succulent beef, rich gourmet cheese and crayfish plucked from the Island's crystal clear waters. Now it's about the golf, too, with Cape Wickham and Ocean Dunes both tipped to break into the World's Top 100 Courses later this year. Australian Air Holidays has been successfully operating tours to King Island for more than 10 years by private charter aircraft. They now offer a range of golf packages to King Island in their ultra-comfortable Alliance Fokker 50 Aircraft. Book a King Island golf or sightseeing experience of a lifetime and be amongst the first to play this iconic island. Call 1800 815 906 or visit australianairholidays.com/tp/king-island-golf for more.

8. Bellarine Peninsula, VIC

Boasting three of Australia's finest golf courses right along the Great Ocean Road, the Bellarine Peninsula is another amazing Victorian region to visit for the ultimate golf weekend away. Barwon Heads Golf Club is carved into the natural dune landscape and promises a challenge you'll long remember. The 36 holes at Thirteenth Beach Golf Links were designed by Tony Cashmore and Nick Faldo, and are a must for any avid golfer. Both the Beach and Creek courses at Thirteenth Beach have spectacular holes that rival any along the east coast. With plenty of accommodation, restaurants and amazing beaches, a weekend getaway to the Bellarine Peninsula is definitely one to mark on your calendar. See 13thbeach.net or bhgc.com.au for more. For something extra unique, stay at Seahaven Village – purpose-built getaway accommodation in the seaside haven of Barwon Heads, just a few minutes walk from the shops, cafes and beaches and within five minutes of Barwon Heads Golf Club and Thirteenth Beach. Call Seahaven Village on (03) 5254 1066 or visit seahavenvillage.com.au

9. Gold Coast, QLD

The Gold Coast is famous for more than its Glitter Strip, theme parks and sandy white beaches. There's also an endless supply of quality public-access golf courses on offer all year round, making this the perfect getaway destination for everyone in the family. Gold Coast Golf Tours can help you experience all the best courses with packages tailored to suit all visiting groups. With varying forms of accommodation thrown in, you can play the Jack Nicklaus-designed Lakelands, the Greg Norman-designed The Glades, Hope Island Resort, RACV Royal Pines Resort (home of the Australian PGA and Australian Ladies Masters), Palmer Gold Coast, Arundel Hills Country

Club, Sanctuary Cove Golf and Country Club, Brookwater and many more. Call 1300 GOLF TRIP or emailggt@norex.com.au for more

Above Par Golf Tours also invite you to experience the Gold Coast's finest golf courses on one of their Queensland golf holiday packages. Get in touch with Above Par on 1300 798 552 or visit abovepargolf.com.au for more travel options on the Gold Coast. golfOZ are another leading travel company that specialises in Gold Coast golf escapes and are available 24/7 to make sure you enjoy 'a little slice of heaven' in the tourist capital. Call (07) 5575 8500 or email at sales@goldcoastgolf.com.au

10. Alice Springs, NT

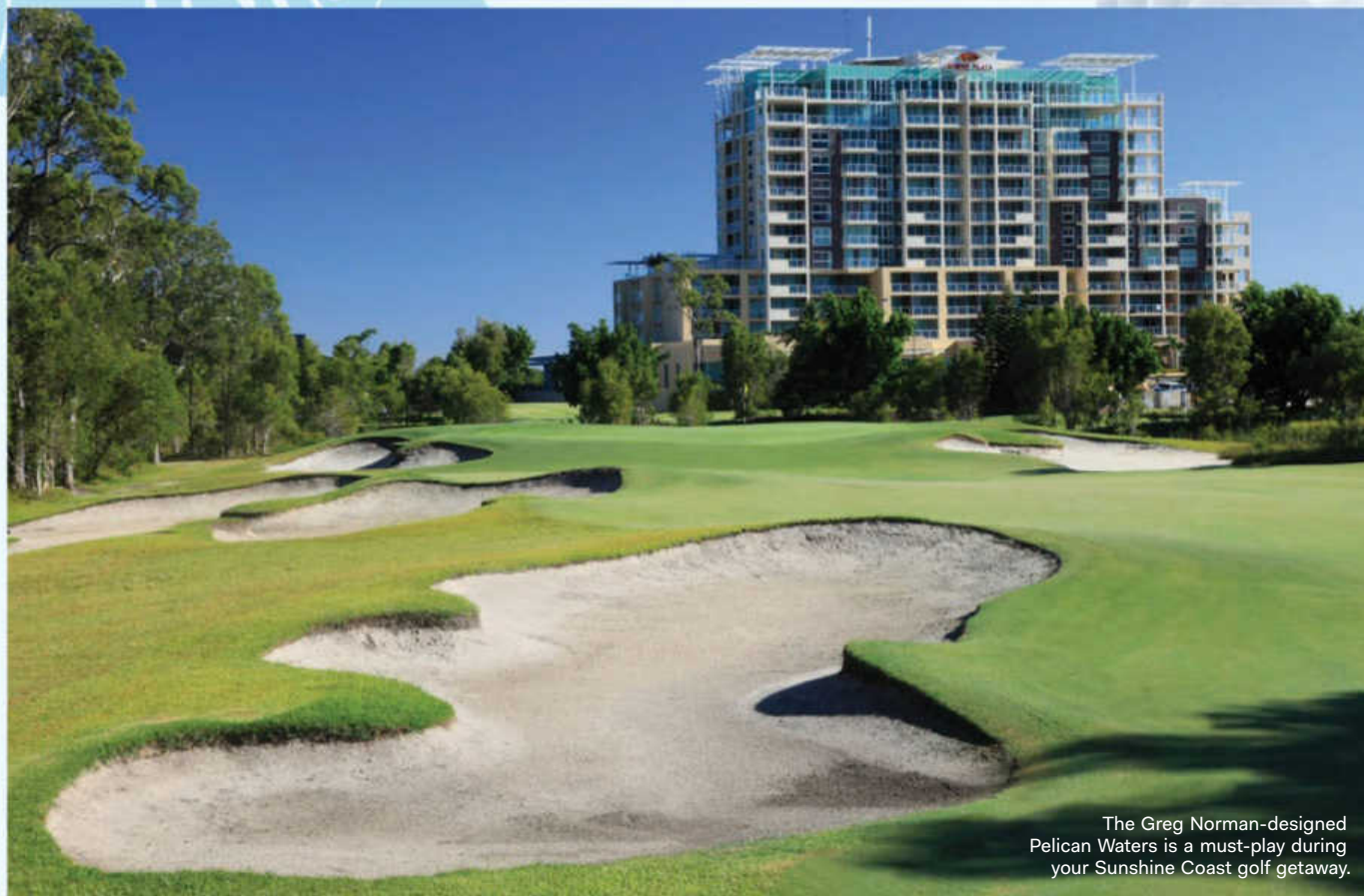
Extreme golf in Australia's Big Red Centre – a weekend at Alice Springs Golf Club is one you will never forget. Unwind at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Alice Springs with a round of golf in the middle of the desert. The Alice Springs Golf Club, located next to the hotel, is set amongst one of the world's finest desert regions. Test your skill and accuracy on the 18-hole, par-72 course at the foothills of the majestic MacDonnell Ranges. Recognised as one of the world's top 10 desert courses, the scenery here will blow your mind and have you appreciating just how lucky we are as a golfing nation. See alicespringsgolfclub.com.au for more.

11. Natadola Bay, Fiji

They say your average heart rate drops when you step off the plane at Nadi International Airport – so relaxing is a trip to this island nation. Its reputation has, over time, cemented Fiji as one of the most popular getaways for Australians because of the short 4-hour flight. We love the Fijian people, the beaches, the recreation and the resorts but we really love Natadola Bay. It's not just the

The new Cape Wickham links course has helped transform King Island into a bucket-list golf destination





The Greg Norman-designed Pelican Waters is a must-play during your Sunshine Coast golf getaway.

Vijay Singh-designed golf course – home of the Fiji International. It's staying at The InterContinental, where singles, couples and families all feel welcome and catered for with an endless array of outdoor activities on offer. It's also where modern Fijian cuisine – like the mouth-watering lobster Kokoda – is complemented by a range of new and old-world wines. For couples looking for a romantic evening for two, intimate dining offers lovebirds the option of a private cabana meal beside the ocean or under the stars. **Bula!** See fiji.intercontinental.com for more.

12. Cork and Fork Cup, NSW

It's one of the best golf weekends of the year and if you love great golf and even better food and wine, lock in the Cork and Fork Cup at The Vintage Golf Resort in the New South Wales Hunter Valley. In conjunction with the Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Association, the fourth annual Cork and Fork Cup will be held on Saturday, June 18, 2016 as part of the Hunter Food and Wine month.

The emphasis is a day of wine and food indulgence, a true degustation showcase. Each tee will feature a marquee and tasting samples from a local signature restaurant or premier Hunter winery. It is a unique way to experience and indulge in the best of the Hunter in one location, while enjoying the peaceful and challenging surrounds of a Greg Norman-designed golf course.

Score a hole-in-one and secure the grand prize of a trip for two to France for an intimate

wine tour for 14 days, all expenses paid. The event is based on a four-person Ambrose so there's no pressure for the food and wine lovers that are not golf experts. The day is about enjoying the best the Hunter has to offer in a unique and fun environment. Bookings are limited so be quick. Call (02) 4998 2208 or visit thevintage.com.au

While you're in the Hunter Valley, why not extend your stay at Cessnock's Wine Country Motor Inn, which specialises in packages for wine lovers, golf groups, seniors and coach groups. Visit winecountrymotorinn.com.au or call (02) 4993 2999 to make a booking and mention this editorial to receive a free wine voucher to use during your stay.

13. Melbourne Sandbelt, VIC

It seemed unthinkable not that long ago that you could walk on to a sandbelt golf course, let alone stay at one. But Victoria Golf Club has changed all that with its exclusive play and stay accommodation package. Now you can experience the outstanding hospitality that this famous club has to offer both on the course and in its historic clubhouse. For \$315 a night (twin share), get full board, breakfast, lunch and a la carte dinner with a round of golf and see why the Melbourne sandbelt is all the rage. Now that's a great weekend for the serious golf nut. See victoriagolf.com.au for more.

Playing opportunities are also available at Yarra Yarra Golf Club for members and their guests, along with interstate and overseas

golfers, members of reciprocal clubs and corporate guests. Established in 1898, Yarra Yarra is one of Melbourne's most prestigious golf clubs, boasting an immaculately presented sandbelt golf course accompanied by a heritage-listed clubhouse. Here you can walk in the footsteps of some of golf's great Major championship winners including Sam Snead, Gary Player, Peter Thomson, Lee Trevino and Greg Norman. See yarrayarra.com.au for more.

14. Sunshine Coast, QLD

Highlighted by Twin Waters, Pelican Waters, Noosa Springs, Pacific Harbour, Headland Golf Club and the newly opened Maroochy River, here is a destination that well and truly fits the bill for anyone chasing sunshine, waves and birdies. With endless beaches, spa and health retreats, markets, restaurants and nightlife, it's easy to see why the Sunshine Coast is one of the country's leading holiday destinations. Coolum Caprice Luxury Holiday Apartments is located alongside the beach and amongst some of the finest championship golf courses in Australia, the most notable being Palmer Resort Coolum (former home of the Australian PGA), Twin Waters, Noosa Springs, Peregrine Springs, Mt Coolum and many more just a short drive away. Coolum Caprice has golf and accommodation packages for groups as small as two and up to larger groups of 50. To enquire about the right package for your group, call 1300 883 134 or visit coolumcaprice.com.au



YARRA YARRA
GOLF CLUB

In Tom Doak's 'Confidential Guide', a review of the architecture of the best courses in the world, the four Par 3's at Yarra Yarra are **rated seventh**
(the only course in this category in the southern hemisphere)



www.yarrrayarra.com.au


— THE —
**Melbourne
Sandbelt**
Classic Golf

The backdrop is as real as the golf is memorable at the breathtaking Millbrook Resort in Queenstown, New Zealand.



15. Yarra Valley, VIC

Only a one-hour drive from Melbourne's CBD, the Yarra Valley has all you need for a luxury weekend escape. Think great wine, 5-star food and accommodation, beautiful views and brilliant golf courses. Highly recommended is the newly opened Eastern Golf Club, which is a 27-hole Greg Norman design suited to all golfers and abilities. There are 18 holes currently in play with nine more to be completed this year. Run by the Eastern Golf Club is the No.1 boutique accommodation in the Yarra Valley, Yering Gorge Cottages, which are situated at the foot of the ranges looking out over the course and greater Yarra Valley. For more information, visit yeringcottages.com.au and easterngolfclub.com.au

Another great course in the Yarra Valley is Yering Meadows. The course has 27 stunning holes and was designed by Ross Watson. Boasting new facilities, a modern clubhouse and uninterrupted views of the Yarra Valley, this also rates high on the Yarra Valley to-do list. See yeringmeadows.com.au for more.

16. Riverina, NSW

The Riverina's natural assets are some of its most popular attractions – from national parks, to lakes and rivers. But the golf isn't too shabby either. From Wagga Wagga, Narrandera and Hay golf clubs to further south in Jerilderie and Deniliquin, picturesque courses populated with wildlife and great hospitality are sandwiched in between endless accommodation and restaurants, all awaiting the unsuspecting visitor. Our tip – book your getaway during Taste Riverina, a month-long 'menu of events' during October each year that celebrate the year's harvest by showcasing food, wine, beer and agricultural produce and experiences

across 17 shires in the region. The golf will take care of itself. See tasteriverina.com.au for more.

17. Queenstown, NZ

One of the most popular golf destinations in the world, headlined by Jack's Point, The Hills and Millbrook Resort golf courses, Queenstown has it all and is a must-visit for every Aussie. Bordered by the spectacular The Remarkables mountain ranges, you can combine the region's breathtaking golf courses with adrenalin sports, including skiing, jetboating, bungee jumping, skydiving and cycling. Then it's time to lower the heart rate and hit the town's many world-class restaurants, including the quaint little town of Arrowtown, where you'll feel like you're on the set of an old western movie. Our tip – sit yourself down in front of an open fire and try the local pinot noir, arguably the finest of its type anywhere in the world. You won't want to leave. See queenstownnz.co.nz for more.

18. Fleurieu Peninsula, SA

Just 45 minutes south of Adelaide, the Fleurieu Peninsula offers some of the best food, wine and golf in South Australia. Situated on the cusp of the magnificent Lady Bay, adjacent to the seaside town of Normanville, you will find Links Lady Bay Resort, one of the most picturesque and challenging golf courses you will come across in Australia. As soon as you drive up to Links Lady Bay Resort, you will understand why this place is the jewel of the Fleurieu Peninsula. Ocean views, beaches, links golf, top-notch accommodation, amazing food and highly regarded cellar doors will make sure you escape in style on your weekend getaway. See linksladybay.com.au for more.

19. Bonville Golf Resort, NSW

There's a reason why this place has received "Australia's Leading Golf Resort" title four times by the World Travel Awards. Just 10 minutes south of Coffs Harbour lies one of the great play-and-stay destinations in Australian golf. Bonville Resort has it all, great public-access golf seven days a week, exceptional food and wine – its restaurant has been awarded a Chef's Hat – and great accommodation for the whole family. All this with some of the country's best beaches just minutes away. See bonvillegolf.com.au for more.

20. Norfolk Island, NSW

Situated in World Heritage Kingston at the very southeasterly edge of Norfolk Island and overlooking the Pacific Ocean and Norfolk's two offshore islands (Nepean and Philip), here is a destination you probably haven't thought of visiting for golf, until now. The scenery is spectacular, and the nine-hole course presents challenges aplenty, even in perfect weather. Plus, there are picturesque convict ruins and structures, including the heritage clubhouse dotted throughout. The Hardy's Wines Pro-am Golf Classic is the perfect opportunity for golf enthusiasts to experience what this place is all about. And there is just enough time during the week to soak up the sights and enjoy some of the island's famous hospitality. Keep an eye out for the great package deals that are on offer for this year's Norfolk Island Pro-Am Golf Classic from August 21-26. See norfolkislandgolf.com for more.

21. Kauri Cliffs, NZ

With a course painted on one of golf's most beautiful canvases, New Zealand's Kauri Cliffs





Play your part in the Grand Reopening of one of Australia's most iconic golf courses, where Jason Day and Adam Scott have both played.

Ramada Resort Kooralbyn Valley will be reopening their world renowned 18 hole Golf Course along with their Hotel, Private Airfield, Polo, Equestrian and convention centre.

Kooralbyn Valley Golf Club was one of the first Golf Courses built in Australia and is widely known as one of the most natural golf courses in the country.

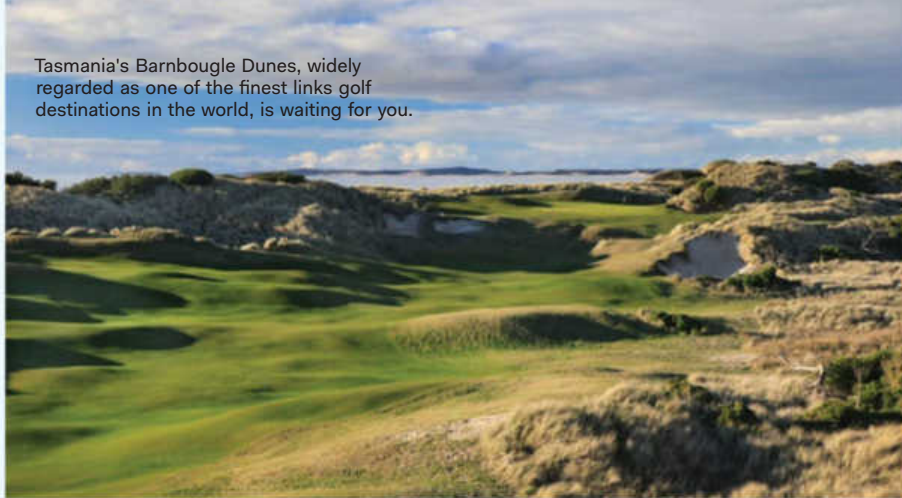
Designed by the late Desmond Muirhead, it became a legacy for all golfers to enjoy.

Come and join us for the day, or experience one of our overnight play and stay packages that will keep you coming back for more.

Call us now to secure your booking for the grand reopening on the 5th of February, 2016, as our accommodation and golf packages are filling up fast. For all bookings and enquiries, please call (07) 5544 6688.



Tasmania's Barnbougles Dunes, widely regarded as one of the finest links golf destinations in the world, is waiting for you.



is on every golfer's bucket list. But there's also a world-class restaurant serving up Pacific Rim fine dining and iconic Kiwi wines, award-winning oceanside lodge accommodation, a luxury spa and truly unique outdoor recreation. Boasting the 39th-ranked golf course on the planet should be reason enough for you to visit this wonderland, but if not, enjoying your own private beach or luxury spa while sampling some of the world's finest sauvignon blanc and local produce should do the trick. Hey, if this place is good enough for billionaire Microsoft founder Bill Gates to visit regularly, it's good enough for you. See kauricliffs.com for more.

22. Barnbougles Dunes & Lost Farm, TAS

If you haven't experienced this place yet it's time to get serious. Two of the best golf courses in the world, not just Australia, have been carved into one of the most spectacular sites on the planet. Barnbougles Dunes (ranked No.4 in Australia) and neighbouring Lost Farm (6) dish up links golf in its finest form and are complemented with outstanding food, wine and customer service. Stay onsite in one of the numerous lodging options, including the 3.5 star cottages at The Dunes or the 4-bed deluxe villas and the luxury golf lodge at Lost Farm. Barnbougles has accommodation options to suit a range of budgets and group sizes. Visit barnbougles.com.au to book your unforgettable golf weekend.

23. Yamba, NSW

Recently voted Australia's No.1 tourist town, Yamba is a unique beachside holiday and lifestyle experience suitable for all members of the family. Experience pristine beaches, lush national parks, beautiful waterways and plenty of leisure activities – all of which make Yamba a very special location to stay at. If you enjoy a friendly social environment and the fun and competition of a great day's golf, a visit to Yamba Golf and Country Club is a must. Just a five-minute walk from the centre of town, it has all the latest facilities you'd expect from a modern sporting club. From the clubhouse and new back deck, you can enjoy picturesque views of the championship 18-hole golf course and watch an abundance

of native Australian flora and fauna while enjoying a cold beverage or two.

The SeaFire Steak and Seafood restaurant is open seven days a week for lunch and dinner, offering locally caught seafood. Get in touch with Yamba Golf and Country Club on (02) 6646 2104.

24. Bass Strait Masters, TAS

It could be the best new golf getaway in the country. The 2016 Bass Strait Masters is the first tour of its kind, and it's right on your doorstep. Flying with Vortex Air, you will travel for four days and three nights to play both Cape Wickham and Ocean Dunes on King Island, followed by more world-class golf at Barnbougles Dunes and Lost Farm. There will be a daily tournament on each course, crowning both an individual and team winner. Then, at the end of it all, the first winner of the Bass Strait Masters will be crowned. Experience Tasmania's rugged charm as you tee off in style at each course. After every day's play, your evenings will consist of relaxation, presentations of the day's prizes by high-profile MCs and dining on fresh local produce, world-class cheeses and award-winning beef, all complemented with delicious Tasmanian wines. Salivating yet? Call on 1300 867 839 or visit vortexair.com.au.



Cypress Lakes Resort is one of several courses that make the NSW Hunter Valley one of the most popular weekend getaways in Australia.

25. The National Golf Club, VIC

A key stopover in any Mornington Peninsula visit, The National is worthy of a visit on its own. Now boasting four outstanding golf courses following the acquisition of Long Island in Frankston North, the club is rated by many as the best golf facility in the country and provides interstate-access opportunities at its three-course Cape Schanck home via a request and letter of introduction from your club. Master the world-class Old, Moonah and Ocean courses and stay just minutes away at Cape Schanck House, an award-winning, architecturally designed custom built home that has received national acclaim (best house, national Royal Australian Institute of Architects awards). See nationalgolf.com.au for more.

26. Hunter Valley, NSW

The Hunter Valley is one of Australia's premier wine growing districts and spoilt for golf courses. Whether you're looking for a weekend away from the city, or wish to sample the wine grown from the many vineyards, the Hunter Valley is the destination you've been looking for. Visit as many of the 80 wineries in the region as you can, sample some of the finest cuisine in the state outside Sydney, stay in beautiful country hotels and guesthouses or even go aloft in a hot air balloon at dawn. And for some golf? Let All Around The Vines drive your group to and from your game. You will be collected from your place of accommodation in an air-conditioned bus and then get taken to your chosen course. The company offers three to six-day tours including accommodation and transfers to and from the courses. Your choice of championship layouts includes The Vintage, Hunter Valley Golf, Cypress Lakes Resort, Pacific Dunes, Horizons and Newcastle Golf Club. Call 0459 145 065 or visit allaroundthevines.com.au for more. 📍

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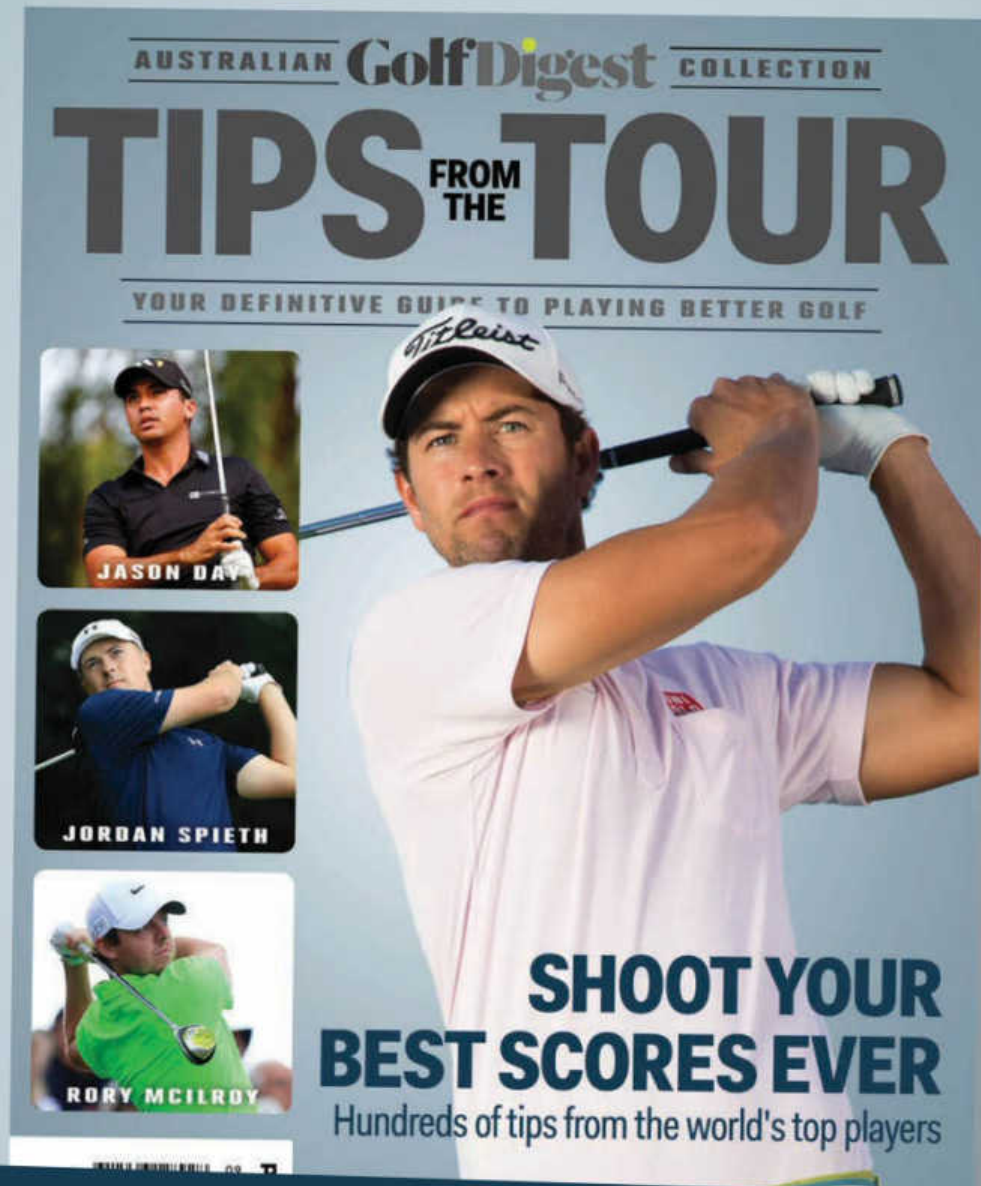


"YOU'VE GOTTA GO."

ASK ME ABOUT MY TRIP TO ALASKA, and that's the first thing I'll tell you. Because it's true: You have to go there to believe it. ▶ I've shot photos of mountain golf courses in the Himalayas, the Swiss Alps and the Canadian Rockies. What makes Alaska so different: These massive, snowcapped mountains just go on *forever*. ▶ I took the photos on these pages during a two-week visit in May 2014. My wife, Christina, and I flew into Anchorage. We then made the two-day, 1,200-kilometre drive down to Haines. This took us way, way off the grid. We would often drive for hours without seeing a single car going in either direction. From Haines we caught a 4½-hour ferry to Juneau before flying home. ▶ We arrived in Alaska on the early side of its golf season. I saw some people out playing, but the days were brisk and courses were still in pretty rough condition. June through September are the peak months, with average high temps in the low to mid 60s. It's a short golf season, but at least the days are long. You can tee off at 4:30am and play till midnight.

The second hole at **Palmer Golf Course**, with **Matanuska Peak** in the background.

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THEIR FAVOURITE TIPS IN THIS 180-PAGE SPECIAL

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Though Alaska draws more than 1.5 million tourists a year, my sense is not a lot of them are there to play golf. Its courses seem mainly populated by locals. These are casual places, where bluejeans are definitely welcome and green fees seldom top \$US30 for 18 holes.

The challenge won't be a difficult par 5. It will be managing the distractions: fairways stamped with wildlife tracks, bald eagles soaring overhead, and views that change continually. The courses I shot integrate the player into this incredible scenery. In playing a round, you become part of it.

Shooting these photos meant getting to the courses very early, often before any employees were there. One guy warned me, half-jokingly, that I should bring a shotgun because of the wildlife I might encounter. I didn't bring a gun, but Christina served as my lookout on a few mornings.

"Make a lot of noise, and bears will go away," people told us. We saw a few bears on the trip, but none on a golf course. At one place, we spotted fresh bear tracks.

The bigger threat, apparently, is moose. "Bears will leave you alone," one local explained, "but moose are crazy. They'll knock you down and stomp you to death." We saw some moose, though they were never close enough to make us fear for our lives.

One thing I couldn't get over was the eagles. Never in my life have I seen so many. They were everywhere. And it wasn't even migrating season. In autumn, I'm told, up to 4,000 eagles descend on the Alaska Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve near Haines.

That alone is reason enough for a return visit. In the meantime, I'll always have the memories of Alaska's incredible mountains – stretching out as far as my lens can see . . . and beyond. 📷



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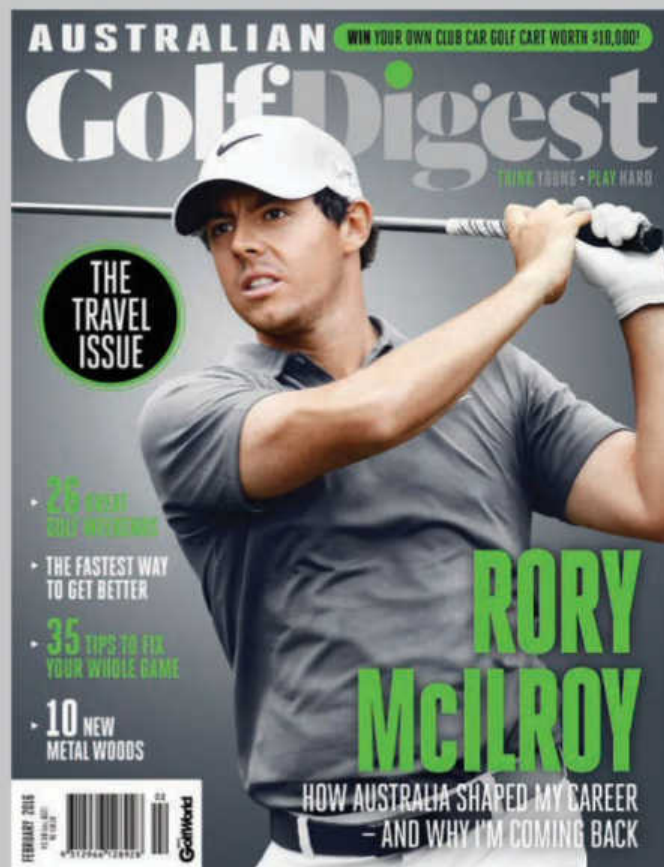


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AVOIDING THE SECOND YEAR blues

No longer a rookie, Australia's Minjee Lee faces new challenges in her second season as a professional on the LPGA Tour. **By Rohan Clarke**

M

INJEE Lee's first season on the LPGA Tour will go down as a raging success. But it was anything but that last April. She had missed three

cuts in a row, sacked two caddies and broken 70 only once all year. And she was homesick.

A downcast Lee arrived at Los Angeles Airport with her mother, Clara, carrying seven pieces of luggage. Can you imagine travelling with seven bags and suitcases? Forget about being weighed down by expectations. Minjee was literally weighed down. On domestic travel in the United States, it would be depressing.

It's a tribute to her support network – coach Ritchie Smith, biomechanist Ryan Lumsden and Irish physiotherapist Orlaith Buckley – that they were able to get her mind back on the job over the next four days. Five weeks later she won the Kingsmill Championship to become the seventh golfer to win on the LPGA Tour before their 19th birthday.

After a slow start, a good middle and solid finish, the teenager from Royal Fremantle Golf Club had produced one of the finest seasons by an Australian rookie in America – not as brilliant as Karrie Webb's trailblazing season of 1996, but as good (if not better) than the debuts of Jan Stephenson (1974) and Marc Leishman (2009).

Room for improvement

With one victory and six finishes in the top 10, Lee's results drew attention to her game. In a straw poll of players conducted by LPGA.com, Lee was recognised for having the 'Best Swing on the LPGA Tour'. Her name was mentioned most often among the tour's sweetest swingers, such as Na Yeon Choi, Jessica Korda and Hyo Joo Kim.

Flattering, but her Perth-based coach Ritchie Smith doesn't agree. He looks at Lee's swing critically, because that's his job. He prefers the smooth rhythmic swing of Korea's Choi, an endorsement supported by Hall of Famer Juli Inkster.

So while it's a nice compliment to be admired, Smith sees room for improvement. He doesn't like Minjee's attack on the ball, which isn't consistent enough to be a truly great action. That said, her swing is really





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‘She can demolish a field if she putts well, which we saw at Kingsmill when she putted brilliantly over the last 18 holes and won quite comfortably,’

good dynamically and it certainly looks better than a lot of the other girls out on tour.

Hence, Smith is optimistic about 2016, believing Lee can push into the world's top 10 on the Rolex Rankings for women's golf. But for that to happen, she has to address some weaknesses.

“Technically, she gets the club too far caught behind her. So the path becomes a

bit of an issue and the club gets a little bit unstable because of it. The coordination of body and arm movement sometimes – well, not sometimes, all the time – is a little bit inconsistent.”

Lee also needs a lower ball flight with her tee shots and irons. And that's the coordination issue. If the club gets caught behind, then the clubhead is shallow through

the point of impact. Loft is increased and the result is a higher ball flight.

In Total Driving, which combines distance and accuracy, Lee ranked an impressive 6th on the LPGA Tour. With an Average Driving Distance of 259.6 yards, Lee is one of the longer hitters in women's golf (17th). It stands to reason that if she can improve her Driving Accuracy (71st, hitting 71.9% of fairways), Lee can become one of the dominant players in women's golf.

To do so she'll have to produce more Rounds in the 60s. In this statistical category, Inbee Park and Lydia Ko shoot in the 60s more than 50 per cent of the time. Lee achieved the mark 31 times from 104 rounds (29.8%). And while she can break par 55.8 per cent of the time, it's a long way behind Park (80.9%) and Ko (77.4%) who lead the tour for Rounds Under Par.

Pitching and chipping is another concern of Smith. “I don't believe she gets enough spin on the ball, which we can relate back to the body coordination with the arms.”

Lee also lost a bit of the feel of holing putts. She can demolish a field if she putts well, which we saw at Kingsmill when she putted brilliantly over the last 18 holes and won quite comfortably. “Her putting fails her when she's not under pressure,” concedes Smith. “And her putting's great when she is. Whether that's a mental thing, I'm not sure.”

It may be attitudinal. Lee appears to thrive on competition, coming down the stretch of a tournament. She also tends to be more focussed on a putt to save par, whereas she's not as desperate when it's a putt for birdie.

This is borne out statistically in Putts Per GIR, which measures the average number of putts per green in regulation. Lee ranked 23rd on tour – not bad. The top-three in this birdie-making category were Stacy Lewis, Ko and Park and it's no coincidence they are the top three on the Women's World Golf Rankings.

However, there's enormous upside to Lee's game from tee to green. “I think once we actually see her putt well and take advantage of her ballstriking, she'll be very, very good,” Smith predicts.

Challenge #1

More demands on her time

Lee, who turns 20 in May, will face a different set of challenges in 2016. As her profile grows, there will be an expectation to promote the LPGA Tour. She can't fly under the radar anymore or use the excuse she's only a rookie.

And whether she accepts it or not, Lee has overtaken Karrie Webb to become Australia's

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At the heart of the image

top-ranked female golfer. With that comes an obligation to be the figurehead of the sport in this country. It will take time to sink in.

When she was 17 and playing the US Women's Open, Smith suggested she go over and sign 30 autographs. Minjee's response was: "Well why, why do that? No one wants my autograph. What's the point of signing an autograph? What does that do?"

Others have remarked that Lee is uncomfortable talking about herself – she just doesn't understand what the big fuss is all about. She gives the impression she doesn't like to do media work, to the point of being difficult.

As she matures, Lee will come to realise her responsibilities. Let's hope she will be open and communicate with the media and interact with the galleries. The last thing the LPGA Tour needs right now is another popular player walking around under management company orders.

Challenge #2

Choosing the right schedule

Lee was one of the ironwomen of the LPGA Tour last year when she played 29 out of a possible 31 events. Only one player teed it up more often (Chella Choi, 31 tournaments). Lee played 104 rounds of golf, not including pro-ams and practice rounds.

It's worth noting the world's top-five players competed in between 24-26 events. Webb played 22 tournaments. So to avoid burnout, Lee needs to be much more selective in the events she plays.

On top of that, Lee didn't have a fixed abode in America last year. She basically commuted from tournament to tournament, staying at other people's homes and hotels. For a large part of the year, Lee was billeted at tournaments or spent time with friends.

That won't happen in 2016 and it should lead to a much more settled performance. Lee will have a lot better idea of which courses she likes and what courses suit her. And she'll have better tee times. (Rookies get grouped with other rookies and qualifiers, which isn't as conducive to good scoring.)

Challenge #3

National pride on the line

Golf returns to the Olympics for the first time in more than a century in Rio. The women's competition in Brazil runs from August 15-21. It could prove to be a pleasant distraction or a needless diversion for an elite golfer. (Adam Scott has already indicated it's not high on his list of priorities.) As Australia's leading player,



To avoid burnout, Lee needs to be much more selective in the events she plays in 2016.

Lee will be the subject of much focus given Australia's insatiable quest for medals.

She will also be the lynchpin for Australia at the second edition of the International Crown (July 21-24). The top-four players from eight countries compete in the biennial teams' event. Australia will be seeking a better result in Chicago after finishing last in the inaugural event. Much will depend on Lee.

Without her and Webb, Australian Ladies Professional Golf delivered a poor performance at The Queens in Japan last December. That matchplay event pitted teams from the Ladies European Tour, LPGA of Japan, Korean LPGA and the ALPG against one another. The

Australians won just two and halved one of their 17 matches to finish bottom.

Challenge #4

The right support network

A positive influence around Lee has been caddie Jeremy Young, the husband of former LPGA Tour member Heather Young. After struggling to find synergy with a bagman in the early part of last season, the partnership with Young appears to have gelled judging by Lee's results since May.

Another constant throughout 2015 was

Lee's mother Clara, an outstanding golfer in her own right. Having a close family member is a common occurrence on the LPGA Tour, especially among Korean-raised players.

As an 18-year-old professional, it was really important for Minjee to have her Mum out on tour. But further down the track it may hinder her progress is she stays there. "Players need to get mentally stronger and that won't happen with her Mum there every week travelling with her," according to one observer.

In football parlance, it's often stated that if you're not improving, then you're going backwards. If Minjee Lee is to avoid a dose of the second-year blues, she will have to maintain the desire to succeed and use her time efficiently on and off the course. The danger would appear to be expecting improvements to come with experience.

Throughout the whole of 2015, there was one characteristic that impressed her coach and leaves him confident that Lee is set for the long haul.

"Resilience," says Smith. "She's really resilient. She's not afraid of winning, she's not afraid of being right there at the pointy end. I think she's a tough kid. Even though she's a happy kid, she's a tough kid." 🏌️

Ko the headline act

WORLD No.1 Lydia Ko [right] will defend the ISPS Handa Women's Australian Open when the national championship returns to Adelaide for the first time in 21 years.

The Grange Golf Club's West Course will host the flagship event on the ALPG Tour from February 18-21. It's estimated South Australia's visitor economy will be boosted by \$3.7 million from staging the Women's Open.

With prizemoney of \$US1.3 million, the jointly co-sanctioned event with the LPGA Tour and Ladies European Tour has the summer's richest purse in Australian golf.

The local challenge will be led by five-time winner Karrie Webb and Australia's top-ranked female golfer Minjee Lee, who was the leading Australian at last year's Open at Royal Melbourne where she finished in a tie for seventh.

The 2016 ALPG schedule begins with pro-ams at Moss Vale (Jan 7-8) and Mount Broughton (Jan 9-10) in the NSW Southern Highlands. It moves to Sydney for events at Oatlands (Jan 14-15), Castle Hill (Jan 19), Pennant Hills (Jan 21-22) and Long Reef (Jan 25).

The bigger tournaments begin in February when Marianne Skarpnord makes a title defence of the Oates Victorian Open at Thirteenth Beach on the Bellarine Peninsula (Feb 4-7). It's followed by the ISPS Handa New Zealand Women's Open at Clearwater Golf Club in Christchurch where Ko is the defending champion (Feb 11-14).

The ALPG Tour moves back to Australia for the Women's Australian Open at The Grange and the RACV Ladies Masters at Royal Pines Resort where Su Oh will defend the title she won as a rookie (Feb 25-28).

The season concludes with the Brisbane Invitational at McLeod Country Golf Club (March 1-2) and a one-dayer at Yamba in Northern NSW (March 4).



‘Whether she accepts it or not, Lee has overtaken Karrie Webb to become Australia's top-ranked female golfer’



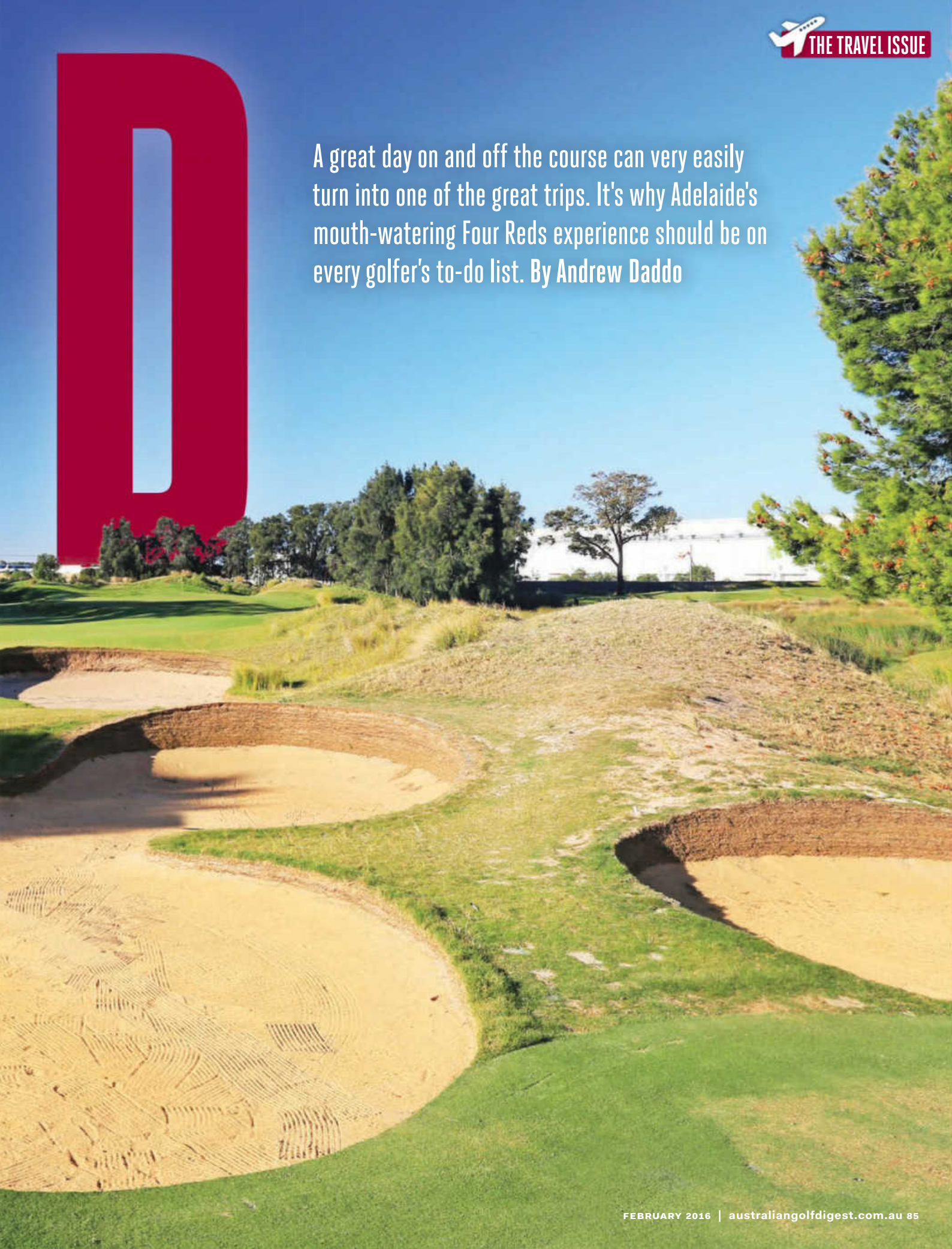
SEEING **RED**



If the bunkers on Glenelg's 16th hole give you hell, you can wash it all away with a glass of Henschke's Keyneton Euphonium in the clubhouse.



D A great day on and off the course can very easily turn into one of the great trips. It's why Adelaide's mouth-watering Four Reds experience should be on every golfer's to-do list. By Andrew Daddo





The 18th at the Grange East course is a nice way to finish your round before you sample a bottle of The Beast Shiraz from Hentley Farm.

THAT was one of the great days, applauded my lifelong friend, Beaz. “It was good, wasn’t it?” I asked. I had a glass of The Beast from Hentley in my paw, and was doing my best to swirl it around the way they do on the wine shows. I wanted to “study the legs” before running it across my tongue and into my gullet.

“Not good, Daddster,” says Beaz. “Good is a win at the races. It’s go-karting or standing up on a surfboard. A good day is shooting your handicap or being let off a speeding ticket. But this? This has been one of the *great* days!”

I took a long snort of The Beast, letting the earthy, truffle-like aromas mingle with the blackberries and black olives. It’s a heady wine with “soft, grippy tannins, and quite rich.” Yes, it had been a brilliant day, and was heading for quite a night as the shadows lengthened across The Grange golf course in Adelaide. This scene verged on poetic.

I’d sent Beaz an email a week earlier, saying I was heading to Adelaide for bit of golf and asked if he was able to join me.

“Adelaide? For golf? On a school day? Are you mad?”

“Well, no,” I replied. “It’s a chance to try something you might not have considered.”

“But Adelaide?” says Beaz, anchored in Melbourne’s sandbelt. He’s spoilt and he knows it.

“Trust me,” I said.

This might be the moment to declare an interest: I am a massive fan of golf in The City of Churches. In fact, I love the city of Adelaide and the way she’s growing up out of her rural roots and sharing her best bits with the rest of us. She holds a unique place in Australia, hanging onto that beautiful,

welcoming small-town feel, but overflowing with big-town benefits.

This is a city changing for the better: great food, funky cafes, trendy little bars popping up like bindis on our front lawn – once they get their barbs into you, you’re hooked. I love looking back from the Adelaide Hills across the vast flatlands of the city to Glenelg, and beyond.

Then there’s the wine. If Melbournians talk sport and Sydneysiders talk real estate, Croweaters talk the grape. They love wine; it’s in their blood and their history.

West is the only direction you can head without finding a world-class winery, and that’s Gulf St Vincent – where you’ll boat your load of fish instead.

South Australia has always been a great provider for our country – athletes, produce, exports, tourism and the arts. It makes absolute sense she’s also got great golf courses as well. Perched on the edge of everything and that great expanse of nothingness, Adelaide has been the launchpad for so many great Australian stories.

But golf was Adelaide’s biggest lure for me, and possibly her biggest surprise.

Like Melbourne, Adelaide has a sandbelt peppered with golf courses. In true entrepreneurial style, these clubs have banded together to create a kind of super experience – hence Beaz’s comment, “one of the great days.”

At the pointy end of the golf experience, you’ve got four courses in Australia’s top 40 to choose from, but it would be unfair to rule out other courses given time and opportunity. Given judging is entirely subjective, I’ll confess my surprise that Glenelg, Kooyonga and the East Course at The Grange aren’t considerably higher up the list of Australia’s absolute best.

Royal Adelaide sits within chipping distance of the top 10 courses in Australia, and with current work in place, it could easily crack one of the top spots.

The idea from the big four of South Australian golf was to team up with some of Australia’s best wines to create an experience to look forward to and, ultimately, savour.

And so the ‘Four Reds’ golf tour was born.

Glenelg by the glassful

My favourite, I think. But how do you love something that clearly doesn’t love you back? Not for the first 10 holes anyway. It was difficult, but not mercilessly so. Glenelg is a beautifully presented golf course that celebrates the good shots, maybe even the average ones, but will rain hell upon your score should you take on parts of the course not marked for mowing.

It’s not ridiculously narrow or even mean; you just have to negotiate rolling fairways, billions of manicured bunkers and greens that were described to me as ‘subtle.’ I missed a lot of putts – more than usual – and many by millimetres. Every time the ball slid by, or lipped out or just missed (by feet) someone in the group would say, “Hmm ... subtle greens. Hard to read if you haven’t seen them before.” I kept searching for the “you ain’t from around here” tone but it wasn’t there.

The greens were subtle, but they were true and fast and I’m quite keen to get back and give them a chance to apologise. It’s a pure test of golf for all levels, but not a place to fear for the higher handicappers. This is a modern, progressive and the most relaxed of Adelaide’s top courses. They make no bones about their intention to be the best-presented course in



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‘ To stand on Royal Adelaide's seventh tee [*pictured*] and see those six bunkers protecting the front of the green, knowing there's another on each side for good measure, is daunting yet quite spectacular ’



South Australia, and it is a wonderful track. The mantra for play here? “Fairways good, long grass bad.”

After golf, you must eat. If you play here as part of the Four Reds experience, it'll be with a brilliant tasting platter and a bottle of Henschke's Keyneton Euphonium. It's a shiraz/cab sav/merlot from one of the world's great winemakers and it will give you a new appreciation of the word 'subtle.' Dinner in the Pinehill Bistro is excellent. With the floodlit 18th before you and a predictably extensive South Australian winelist, it was one of the stellar meals of the trip.

Royal Adelaide – pretty as a picture

I had a moment at Royal Adelaide Golf Club that was somewhere between surreal and bizarre ... but most definitely wonderful. I love South Australia's most iconic golf club because it has everything, including a commuter train that passes through the course throughout the day – it is quiet, though, so no excuses here for the fast, subtle greens. Yes, the greens here are subtle, too.

Everything stacks up for Royal Adelaide: A Rymill/Gardner creation built from the dunes in 1903, re-imagined by Alister MacKenzie in 1926 and considered a masterpiece ever since. Royal Adelaide is regularly in the world's top 100 courses.

It's interesting. I took lots of photos at Royal Adelaide, but none of them adequately captured the joy of playing here. Obviously, I'm not a great photographer, but I thought the seventh, with its magical bunkering, would have transcended anyone's snapper ability. To stand on the tee and see those six bunkers protecting the front of the green, knowing there's another on each side for good measure is daunting, and yet, quite spectacular. Who needs island greens when you've got sand like that?

The most breathtaking moment came on the 10th tee. It's a lovely hole – working towards a tough second shot as the green slopes away from the fairway in a very 'unsubtle' way. To the right of the tee is a pine – it transported me back to my HSC where I studied the work of French impressionist Paul Cézanne. Sounds pretentious, doesn't it? But it was unmistakable. When I squinted, I could see Cézanne's *The Bay of Marseilles*, *Seen*

The gorgeous 11th tee box at Glenelg Golf Club.



from *L'Estaque*. It's from the Chateau Noir series. And I vaguely remembered his words about putting his paintings next to God-made objects like flowers or trees to see if they clash. If they didn't clash, it was art. The longer I looked from the tee, the more art I could see laid out before me.

Cézanne also said, “We live in a rainbow of chaos,” which is a fair description of the golf that was played that day.

Royal Adelaide is literally unmissable for every golfer. It's as simple as that. The wine matching with the tasting plate after the round was the Bakers Gully Syrah from Clarendon Hills. The verdict? We ordered a second bottle...

Kooyonga's true character test

H.L. “Cargie” Rymill, one of the initial course designers of Royal Adelaide, is to be thanked for the magic that is Kooyonga. As you'd expect from one of Alister MacKenzie's disciples, this is a gorgeous place to play golf on an utterly beautiful track.

I've heard Kooyonga described as the “height of hoity toity.” If that means being welcomed warmly and made to feel part of the fabric of this impressive club, they certainly got that right.

The clubhouse is magnificent but fails to overshadow the golf course, which may well be described as a genuine examination of your golfing ability. It's possibly how all great courses should be remembered, and the condition of Kooyonga will stay with me for

some time to come. I'd seen it on the TV many times, but tournament golf rarely shows the true character of a golf course.

I was struck by the undulations; especially when remembering how flat Adelaide appeared to be from the hills to the East. It's the pines that got me, and the hard, fast greens, the sloping fairways and again, the stunning red sand of the bunkers. There's a chance I went off too early suggesting Glenelg might be my favourite. For on reflection, Kooyonga might be, too.

Like Glenelg, I was given a touch-up here, so there may be something in the old adage, “Treat 'em mean, keep 'em keen”. As was pointed out by our playing partners, the course is constantly evolving. Most notably, a ‘canopy raising’ is underway along many of the fairways. That's clearing the bush and brush under the trees in the rough, giving the golfer a chance to get a swing at the ball and to keep play moving.

We drank my favourite wine after the game – the Rockford Basket Press from the Barossa Valley. It's heaven in a bottle, and given a morning off, or an afternoon, well worth a visit to see Robert O'Callaghan – founder and winemaker who put it all together. A true character – possibly eccentric – he's making new wine the old way, and if your golf game fails you, this wine will not.

The Grange had me at Greg

“One of the great days,” said my mate Beaz. And he was right, because days like this don't come along very often and it exists as a reminder that we should take our chances in life to enjoy special moments, because we never know when the chance might come again.

We had breakfast, it was fine, then dropped into a café frothing with hipsters to get a coffee for the drive up to Penfolds. Now, to be fair, we could have gone for a tour to Adelaide Oval. Or perhaps a morning's fishing in the harbour. We could have done a tour of Glenelg or a drive to the Barossa, a night in the Claire, or even a quick hit at Mt Osmond for a chance to look back at the city.

But we opted for Penfolds – it's a winey kind of trip, plus we're winey kind of guys. So we opted for the Ultimate Penfolds Experience – it



Kooyonga Golf Club serves up Andrew Daddo's favourite wine – Rockford Basket Press – as part of the Four Reds experience.



sounds even better in a deep movie-promo American accent. “The Ultimate Penfolds Experience.” There was a full tour of the Magill Estate, the spiritual home of Penfolds and staggeringly close to the city of Adelaide.

This is the home of the Grange story, where Dr Christopher and Mary Penfold lived and conceived the world’s best red. Zoe, our guide, showed us through the cottage and the Magill Estate Winery, from where the grapes come in to where the bottles go out – all of it. The bluestone cellars, underground tunnels, Still House, tasting rooms and ... the Holy Grail – the Grange tasting room.

It was set for three people ... we were three people. I had no idea we’d signed up for that. I’d hoped, of course, and on the four times we walked past, I’d yearned to enter. Finally, Zoe said, “Are you ready to try Grange?” Not, “the Grange,” or “a Grange.” It was “*Grange*.”

You bet. And even then, it wasn’t “sit down, drink up.” We worked our way towards it, past a 2007 Yattarna Chardonnay, and all that biscuit, lemon curdish, raw hazelnut perfume. There was a 2011 Magill Estate Shiraz – pink peppercorns, violet, lavender and red fruits, like currents. The ’07 RWT was plush and ripe; silky tannins caressed my tongue in ways my normal wine does not.

Beaz was weeping, openly. Zoe nodded appreciatively. “Save it,” she said. “The Max Schubert cab sav is from 2012. It’s young, of course, but as it’s Max’s 100th birthday, it’s going to be extraordinary.”

It was my turn to weep, though I did a fair job of hiding it. We were there, and a glass

‘ Given another chance to play The Grange [above], I’d pick the East course over the West. But my feelings for Greg Norman might have something to do with that ,

of ’81 sat before me. I have tasted Grange Hermitage before, but not like this. Not after a dry biscuit and two dry, green olives to settle my palette. Or a Zoe to tell me what I was about to experience, instead of rushing it around a glass, having a snort and saying, “yum.” This was anticipation at its finest, like that moment before the first tee, or the final putt.

The year 1981 had a drought-affected summer, so this was only a 3-star vintage. To look at – deep, brick-red. Roasted meats, tobacco, prune, dark chocolate on the nose. It was brilliant because it was supposed to be brilliant, but it was also gobsmackingly good. Really. And not just the wine, but also the moment in time, the atmosphere and the company – the whole dang thing.

The 2009 Grange – a 4-star year, rich, plush and fresh – was buoyant.

I was buoyant. We all were. And this was how we prepared to play The Grange, East. It’s a Norman course, and is vastly different to the Clayton redesign of the West course.

To be honest, given the lead up, I can’t imagine how we could have failed to enjoy the golf. Having said that, the Grange East not only held our euphoria, it took it to another level.

The greens may have got the better of us, again, but the course was both enjoyable and challenging. The large, sandy waste areas begged us to take them on, with predictably average results. It was great, and given another chance to play The Grange, I’d pick East over West. But my feelings for Norman might have something to do with that.

On any other day, The Beast Shiraz from Hentley Farm would have been top of the pops. On this day, while good, it was never going to knock off the wines from earlier in the day.

Look, I understand the genuine excitement surrounding some of Australia’s newest courses. I do. The thought of playing on a near-deserted island, hitting along rugged coastlines with a 60-knot southerly bluster up my clacker is thrilling at the very least. But after a week in the red sandbelt of Adelaide, I found a new appreciation for the traditionally styled golf game as well.

One of the great days can very easily be one of the great trips, and Adelaide should have its place on every golfer’s bucket list. ☺

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WHILE YOU'RE THERE...

Want more golf on your South Australian getaway? Pencil these hidden gems into your itinerary

Sandy Creek Golf Club



Sandy Creek Golf Club

Established in 1904, the Sandy Creek Golf Club is located in the world famous Barossa Valley wine region, just 50 minutes from the Adelaide CBD. The picturesque 18-hole, par-72 course provides the complete golfing experience, with superbly manicured greens, lush fairways and several holes featuring well positioned water hazards and bunkers. The challenging sandbelt layout is widely recognised for having some of the best putting surfaces in South Australia and in 2015 played host to the South Australian State Foursomes Championships.

Sandy Creek Golf Club welcomes visitors and boasts significant practice facilities including a 320m-driving range, practice bunker and two practice greens, plus a fleet of modern electric carts. This is complemented with a fully equipped professional shop run by certified PGA professional Brayden Wauchope.

The clubhouse and extensive deck area overlook the 17th fairway and 18th green, providing the perfect setting to relax after your round and enjoy a selection of local Barossa wines and a menu stacked with local produce. Go to sandycreekgolf.com.au for more.

Fleurieu Golf Club

Located in the heart of South Australia's Fleurieu Peninsula, the Fleurieu golf course is an easy 50-minute drive from Adelaide's CBD.

Large greens are a feature of the design coupled with numerous lakes and 89 bunkers ready and waiting to punish errant shots.

Modelled on the links-style courses of Scotland and England, the international-standard Fleurieu layout is nestled in gently undulating terrain and surrounded by natural bushland. The club's Eagle's Nest Bar and Restaurant is open seven days for lunch, and Friday and Saturday evenings for dinner. With stunning views of the back nine holes and Mount Compass, it's a perfect place to enjoy either a post-round snack or a full a la carte menu. Belo Brazil – charcoal barbecue offers you the flavours of Brazil with a traditional Brazilian Churrasco dining experience on Friday and Saturday nights, or Sunday lunch. Served 'Rodizio' style, the all-you-can-eat option is a truly unique and delicious golf

club experience and the perfect addition to your South Australian golf getaway. See fleurieugolfcourse.com.au for more.

Tanunda Pines and Barossa Valley Novotel

Tanunda Pines Golf Club is located adjacent to the Novotel Barossa Valley Resort in the heart of the Barossa Valley, just one-hour's drive from Adelaide.

Established in 1938, this now privately owned public-access course has recently undergone a transformation with the introduction of six new holes, elevating it to one of Australia's finest regional woodlands golf courses.

Tanunda Pines weaves its fairways among 100-year-old gum trees and sits on a sandy loam as a base, the perfect recipe for tightly packed fairways and super-fast greens.

Offering views over Jacob's Creek and St Hallett vineyards, the course is home to an abundance of native bird and animal life and is the perfect location to explore all the delights of the Barossa Valley.

The Novotel Barossa Valley Resort boasts 140 suites, leisure complex and conference facilities for up to 300 delegates, making it an ideal base for a personal or corporate golf getaway. Tanunda Pines Golf Club also partners with many of the wonderful local bed & breakfast accommodation houses, hotels and caravan parks to provide visitors with a fantastic range of options to suit their preference and budget. Typical packages include accommodation, full breakfasts, 18 holes golf, range balls and wine. Book your Play & Stay packages at novotelbarossa.com

Fleurieu Golf Club



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ocean views that reflect the true character of the Southern Fleurieu region. Filled with local history and heritage, the land was originally a sheep and cattle farm before being transformed into a championship golf course that is receiving rave reviews. Open to visitors seven days a week, book your round on (08) 8558 0650 or visit linksladybay.com.au





KEVIN KISNER

AGE 31

LIVES South Carolina

STORY Won the US PGA Tour's 2015 RSM Classic, moving inside the top 20 in the world.

HAVING A CLEAR MIND
When I'm not hanging with my wife and daughter, I love fishing and hunting. I'll turn my phone off and just forget about golf. Soon, I'll be going on a big duck-hunting trip in Louisiana with David Toms. That'll be sweet.

STRATEGIC SCHEDULE
Once the West Coast swing is over, it's time to make my move. I didn't grow up putting on those greens, so I tend to play my best back East. I'll plan my schedule accordingly. It worked this year: I doubled my career earnings on tour.

CLUB	MTS*
DRIVER	230
3-WOOD	209
2-HYBRID	197
3-IRON	188
4-IRON	176
5-IRON	167
6-IRON	159
7-IRON	150
8-IRON	143
9-IRON	130
PW	109
SW	99
LW	83
*carry distance	

HYBRID

SPECS Callaway X2 Hot, Matrix Ozik Altus shaft, X-flex, 18° loft

The first time I hit this club was on the course. My first two shots rolled to within a foot. Ever since, I've never hit this on the range. Just on the course.

DRIVER

SPECS Callaway Great Big Bertha, 8.5° loft, Aldila Tour Green 75 shaft, X-flex, D-3 swingweight, 44½ inches

I switched to this driver last year. The clean toplines and the matte black finish fit my eye.

IRONS

SPECS Callaway Apex Utility (21°), Callaway Apex Pro 4- through 9-iron, Nippon N.S. Pro Modus® shafts, Golf Pride Tour Velvet 58 round grips

Most irons look the same to me. So finding irons that feel right is crucial. I've played these for the entire year.



My favourite crew

Most of my time off the course is spent with my wife, Brittany, and our 16-month-old daughter, Kate. Love 'em!

FAIRWAY WOOD

SPECS Callaway XR Pro fairway wood, 16° loft, Aldila NV 2KXV shaft, D-4 swingweight, 42¾ inches

Similar to my driver, I look for a club with great feedback.

WEDGES

SPECS Callaway Mack Daddy 2 (47°, 52°, 58°), Nippon WV125 shafts

Callaway's Roger Cleveland built these after watching me practise. I rose 100 spots (to 21st) in scrambling last season.

PUTTER

SPECS Odyssey White Hot Pro #7, 34¾ inches, 3.5° loft, SuperStroke XL 2.0 grip

This is the same style I've used since college. I like the way my hands work with the oversize, non-tapered grip.

Simple things
My only superstition: I mark my Titleist Pro V1x with a quarter – always heads up.





Established in 1904, the **SANDY CREEK GOLF CLUB** is located in the World famous Barossa Valley wine region, just 50 minutes from the Adelaide CBD. The picturesque 18-hole, par 72 course (6095 metres) provides the complete golfing experience, with superbly manicured greens, lush fairways and several holes featuring well positioned water hazards and bunkers.

The challenging sand belt course is widely recognised for having some of the best putting surfaces in South Australia and in 2015 played host to the State Foursomes Championships.

SANDY CREEK GOLF CLUB warmly welcomes visitors and a range of stay and play packages including transfers & winery tours can be arranged for you through our sponsorship partner Getaways SA.

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LIVING THE HIGH LIFE

Perched on the edge of the Rakaia River in New Zealand's oxygen-rich high country, Terrace Downs Resort dishes up world-class play-and-stay golf in one of the world's most spectacular and largely underrated regions. "*Kia ora*" and welcome to the gateway to the South Island.

If this setting doesn't lower your heart rate after a thrilling 18-hole adventure, nothing will.



LET'S get one thing straight right off the bat: there's spectacular ... and then there's *New Zealand*.

We've all seen the jaw-dropping images of Cape Kidnappers and Kauri Cliffs on our neighbour's North Island – both choice destinations for Aussie golfers. But further south there's a stretch of landscape so breathtakingly beautiful and action-packed, it can stand on its own two feet alongside the adrenalin mecca of Queenstown.

Just an hour's drive from Christchurch International Airport sits the stunning golf retreat of Terrace Downs Resort, set amongst beautiful farmland under the unforgettable shadow of Mt Hutt.

Boasting New Zealand's only high country golf course and fine cuisine dining, Terrace Downs Resort is seen as the perfect escape for golfers of all ages and abilities. Just ask 2015 AUSTRALIAN GOLF DIGEST Senior Player of the Year, Peter Fowler, a regular at Terrace Downs through his tour ambassadorship.

‘Visiting Aussies can expect great scenery and a warm welcome from some friendly, hospitable Kiwis,’

– 2015 AUSTRALIAN GOLF DIGEST Senior Player of the Year, Peter Fowler

“Terrace Downs is very special, not just for golf but for its stunning views of the river canyon on the 16th and overall views of the Southern Alps,” says Fowler. “Visiting Aussies can expect great scenery and a warm welcome from some friendly, hospitable Kiwis.”

Alpine golf at its best

Terrace Downs boasts a highly rated par-72, 18-hole championship golf course set at the foothills of the Southern Alps. Officially opened in December 2001, it offers a unique blend of parklands and links-style golf

with an underlying integration within its natural environment. While the views of the Rakaia Gorge and mountain vistas provide a constant challenge for players to keep their eye on the ball, this is a layout that certainly demands creative flair and a little risk-reward throughout your 18-hole adventure. The signature 16th hole is perhaps the most memorable and will ignite the inner photographer in you to get to work.

“The course is fun and has a number of testing holes,” says Fowler. “It also has some wonderful undulations which make for some challenging shots.”



Great golf with breathtaking 360-degree views, anyone?



You won't want to leave Terrace Downs Resort after experiencing the deluxe accommodation on offer.

The clubhouse is equipped with a gym and boasts sweeping views of the course, while the luxury appointed locker rooms add a touch of prestige to your stay.

Away from the fairways

Golf is not the only reason to visit Terrace Downs. The resort offers something for everyone. Naturally, given its close proximity to the neighboring ski fields, it's a winter wonderland for some. "The ski fields are often used by European ski teams during the European summer, such is their quality," says Fowler.

But if skiing isn't your thing, that's fine. There's the region's famous clay shooting and archery provided by Newzengland Ltd, jetboating on the Rakaia River, horse trekking and tours of active New Zealand farms, fishing and plenty of walking tracks that'll ignite your senses.

Also located on the property is

the indulgent day spa with a range of treatments to relax and treat yourself, or your significant other.


The clubhouse provides the perfect setting to relax, where you can enjoy a refreshment in the café during the day or dining in the Hunters restaurant at night, where experienced chefs will create mouth-watering meals to savour.

Not your average stay

Terrace Downs Resort offers a choice of two deluxe accommodation options. The villa suites are self-contained units with luxurious beds, a delightful raised spa bath and spacious open-plan living areas. Then there are the chalets – separate four and seven-bedroom houses spread amongst the resort. These beautiful chalets boast all modern conveniences and great indoor-outdoor living areas. Both these luxury accommodation options have stunning



views of the golf course and Mt Hutt. Terrace Downs also offers beautiful locations for ceremony sites, perfect for any season. The events team offer a personalised service and are dedicated to ensure your day is seamless. So if wedding bells are ringing, this should be high on your list.

Transfers from the airport can be arranged prior to your arrival via reception, with helicopter transfers also available for those seeking some added adrenalin. 

For more information on Terrace Downs Resort, visit terracedowns.co.nz





ENJOY THESE LESSONS
FROM OUR CLASSIC
MY SHOT INTERVIEW SERIES

BY GUY YOCOM

ACTORS, athletes and daredevils. Inventors, pioneers and teachers. Golfers of every kind: young and old, famous and obscure, pro and amateur. In the long history of AUSTRALIAN GOLF DIGEST, no feature has brought to life the people in and around golf more distinctively than the My Shot series. Beginning in 2002, when we visited 89-year-old Sam Snead at his home in Virginia, we've invited the game's most compelling characters to provide a first-person telling of who they are, not just as golfers but as people. From each has come opinion, wisdom, humour, hope, regret and ruminations on what Bobby Jones called the greatest game of all. ► Turn the pages and take in the revealing passages and portraits: Our very own Greg Norman on the dangers of golf Down Under, Arnold Palmer and Tom Watson on their golf nightmares, Jack Nicklaus on his helicopter rule, the late Evel Knievel on getting airborne in a golf cart, Bubba Watson on why he won't change a light bulb, and Boo Weekley on his on-course fistfight. Life lessons from many of the personalities we've encountered, many of whom are Hall of Famers. We hope you enjoy their very best shots.

GIMME YOUR BEST SHOT



TAKING ON TIGER

SAM SNEAD / 04.02

MY SHOT'S DEBUT

► Could I have whipped Tiger Woods? Hell, yes. In my prime I could do anything with a golf ball I wanted. No man scared me on the golf course.

TWO BAD BETS

GARY MCCORD / 01.05

► In Valdosta, Georgia, during a mini-tour event, a player named James Black bet me \$20 he could put five golf balls in his mouth and then close his mouth all the way. I tried it but could get only two in there. James put all five balls in, which was amazing, but then he said, "I'll give you a chance to get even. I bet I can fit a whole loaf of bread in my mouth." There's no way a human can do this! So I went out, got one of those extra-long loaves of Wonder Bread and took it back. James just smiled. He started compressing the bread – squeezed it, sat on it, stomped on it – and then began shoving it in his mouth. It took awhile, but he got it all in there and closed his mouth. It was the damndest thing I've ever seen, a bargain for the \$40 it cost me.

A GOLF GENIUS

MOE NORMAN / 11.04

► I'm good with numbers. Number of courses played: 434. Number of courses I can

remember the exact hole yardages: 375. Age when I saw my first doctor: 68. Number of two-stroke penalties in one 11-year period: only one – I hit a drive that went out-of-bounds by two feet. Most balls hit in one day: 2,207. Total balls hit in my lifetime: about 5 million, not counting chips and putts.

FIRST-TEE NERVES

EDDIE MERRINS / 01.07

► First-tee jitters are a real problem for people. Always have been, always will be. The best way to calm yourself a little – I say a little, because a little nervousness can work to your advantage – is to toss your golf ball a few inches in the air and catch it while you wait. Do it over and over. It's an amazing little trick, a form of hypnosis, really. Hypnosis is nothing but deep relaxation, and tossing the ball has a hypnotic, calming effect. Just the fact that you're able to catch the ball will give you enough subliminal confidence to get the ball down the fairway when it's your turn to play.

REMEMBERING A REAL JOB

CURTIS STRANGE / 02.05

► The day I turned pro, I was \$10,000 in debt. My father had passed away when I was 14, and by the time I left college, money was an issue. I'd borrowed the money to play my last year of



SNEAD: GETTY IMAGES • DUFNER: WALTER IOOSS JR

amateur golf, and when I turned pro I was living hand to mouth, trying like hell to pay off that loan. There was a lot of pressure, but a lot of guys from that era were used to that and rolled with it. I'd had a job in high school, and I figured if golf didn't work out I'd just get another job, hopefully in the golf business. I'm not saying my values are any better than pro athletes you see today, but for better or worse, most of them have never had a real job.

BROKEN MENTALLY

DR BOB ROTELLA / 01.03

► A former world-class player who can barely break 80 now, and whose name I won't mention, pulled me aside at Westchester a couple of years ago. He told me, "I used to cry when I walked off the 18th green because there was no more golf to play. Now I cry when I walk off the ninth green because I have to play nine more."

DRAWING THE LINE

JASON DUFNER / 08.14

► When I leave the course, the golf bag stays there. I'm not a take-your-putter-back-to-the-hotel kind of guy.

THESE GUYS ARE GOOD

CASEY MARTIN / 03.08

► One week in 2000 I missed the cut at Bay Hill. I was hanging around practising, and I see

Mickelson hitting flop shots. I walk over to watch, and he's doing things that aren't human. I mean, he's taking a full swing on a 40-foot chip and sucking the ball back past the spot where it landed. He's holing shots left and right. If you think Phil is impressive on the golf course, you should watch him practise. It's getting almost depressing, so I go over to the range to say hi to Tiger. He's out there hitting his 240-metre stinger, and then he switches to a wedge and starts banging 100m shots off the flagstick, hooking one, then fading one, then hitting them high and low. I really was about at the top of my game at the time, and this took me down a peg. I limped over to my courtesy car very slowly that day.

SHARKS & OTHER ANIMALS

GREG NORMAN / 03.04

► Don't piss off a kangaroo. He'll stand on his tail and kick the hell out of you with his big feet, which have huge toenails. Don't fool with a koala bear, either. You look at one and want to put him next to your pillow, but climb a tree and mess with him and you've got a problem. Sharks you already know about.

ARNIE'S NIGHTMARE

ARNOLD PALMER / 06.07

► My whole career, I never missed a tee time. Not once, which I suppose is saying a lot

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for a career that's spanned 60 years and thousands of rounds of golf. Now, for many years I've had a recurring dream that I miss my tee time. In the dream there's no consequence because I wake up abruptly. You can't imagine the relief, realising that it was just a dream. Now that I'm retired, I'm hoping to hell that dream will go away.

GOLF PERVERTS

CHUBBY CHANDLER / 10.11

► I call them "golf perverts." We've all met them. They're the people so engrossed in the game they rarely talk about anything else. Golf is their great love and only hobby. Golf perverts assume that everyone shares their level of enthusiasm at all times. They're important because they love the game and help drive it. But people who work in the game or play it professionally all day often don't want to be consumed by it at breakfast and dinner.

AN ACTOR BOMBS

SAMUEL L. JACKSON / 12.05

► I love to sign autographs for kids but insist they say "please." At the AT&T this year, I found myself near the ropes by a large group of kids, all of them waving their programs for me to sign. But I don't hear "please,"

so I figure it's time to enforce the rules. I announce loudly, so the whole gallery can hear, "What are you supposed to say?" The kids don't answer, they just continue waving the programs. I repeat myself, this time more sternly: "What's the magic word?" Still no answer. I'm ready to walk away when one of the bigger kids, with a look of total frustration on his face, starts mumbling loudly. Then it hits me: These kids were from a local school for the deaf. They're on their annual field trip. As the adults shot me looks, I started signing and didn't stop until our group fell a hole behind.

PARTYING WITH TIGER

NOTAH BEGAY III / 10.04

► Tiger and I were at a Sigma Chi fraternity party at Stanford trying, like every other guy, to familiarise ourselves with some friendly coeds. We figured the best place to scope the scene would be from the outskirts of the dance floor. Unfortunately, there were so many people getting their groove on that we couldn't see a damn thing. We looked at each other and then jumped on top of the DJ's five-foot-tall speakers and proceeded to shake our rumps. It wasn't long before we found some alluring dance partners.

ISLAND GREENS

PETE DYE / 07.02

► People have the idea I'm in love with island greens. Well, I've designed two in 50 years. Once you're stereotyped, it's almost impossible to lose it.

MINI-TOUR FISTICUFFS

BOO WEEKLEY / 12.07

► The mini-tours were so unpredictable. On the last day of a tournament in Alabama, me and another guy are tied for the lead when he hooks it left towards some water. "Get down!" I said. "Sit! Land soft!" His ball goes in the water. He growls at me, "Don't ever talk to my golf ball." I said, "Hey, I was just trying to be nice." He said, "I think I'm going to kick your arse," and the next thing you know, we're on the ground, rolling around, throwing punches. Two things happened within the next 30 minutes: I got back on my feet before he did, and I won the tournament.

LAND-MINE ARCHITECTURE

TOM DOAK / 10.05

► Imagine a hole on which you've buried three land mines. The

better player has been informed the land mines are there, but the hacker hasn't been told anything. Now, the poor player will traipse down the fairway without a thought. Given the laws of chance, he'll probably avoid the mines. The better player won't be able to take a step without fear. That's how I approach course design. My objective is to make it difficult for the better golfer by incorporating challenging but subtle features only the trained eye can see, while allowing the hacker to play his usual game. An example would be the collection areas around the greens at Pinehurst No.2. The hacker might have only one way to play onto the green – maybe with a putter. The better player has the options of putting, flopping or pitching into the bank. He chooses knowing that option can blow up in his face.

FEAR OF LOSING CONTROL

JACK NICKLAUS / 04.04

► When I fly in a helicopter, I insist there be two sets of controls, one for me in case something happens to the pilot. I'm no expert, but I know enough to at least get the thing



JACKSON: BEN VAN HOOK • NICKLAUS: GETTY IMAGES



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**"BY THE TIME I'M OLD,
GOLFERS WILL BE
SHOOTING 54s. YOU
PROBABLY WON'T LIVE
TO SEE IT, BUT I WILL."**
—MICHELLE WIE / 08.04

drew Lanny Wadkins, and he was ruthless. He knifed one shot after another stiff to the hole. The poor amateurs, their shoulders sagged every time Lanny swung. He couldn't help himself – once a killer, always a killer. Me, I knifed shot after shot into the water – on purpose. You've got to send a guy to the carpark with a dozen balls, don't you? The way Lanny was bearing down, you'd think he paid for those balls himself.

DEFYING DEATH EVEL KNieVEL / 08.05

► I'd make a jump on a motor-cycle before I'd jump with a golf cart again. In the mid-'70s I played a lot of golf at Rivermont in Georgia. The 17th hole there is a par 3 that's steeply downhill. The path has a series of hairpin turns, and if you ignore them you'll just keep going over a huge ledge. The guys I hung out with down there pointed out that if you gathered enough speed, you could go over the cliff and land where the path resumes farther down the hill. For days they dared me to make the jump, and when I came to the hole in a foul mood one afternoon – I wasn't playing well – I just went for it. Halfway down the hill I realised I'd made a mistake. You have no idea how unstable a three-wheel golf cart is when it becomes airborne. By the grace of God I made a perfect three-point landing, but the tires were like basketballs, and the cart bounced like an SOB. When I got the thing stopped down near the green, I immediately got a royal chewing out from my wife. I couldn't blame her. She'd been in the passenger seat the whole time.

DEALING WITH PRESSURE STACY LEWIS / 07.13

► When you're under pressure in golf, your heart will pound, you'll sweat and maybe even shake. That's OK. Don't fight that. The trick – and I say trick because it took me years to learn – is to slow down your brain. All the

on the ground. Nothing scares me like the thought of not being in control.

THE WAIT THAT SATISFIES DAVID GRAHAM / 06.06

► For years, Jack would invite me to Augusta National for practice rounds the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday the week before the Masters, and I used it to pick his brain. I asked him once why he made such a long backswing – his shoulder turn was second to none. Jack thought for a minute and said, "Good shots are worth waiting for."

BIG TIPPER KEN VENTURI / 12.04 & 08.13

► Frank Sinatra and I were waiting for our car to be brought up after dinner. A kid brings the car and hands me the keys. I reach for my money clip, but Frank pushes my hand aside. "Kid, in the whole time you've been doing this, what's the most you've ever been tipped?" The kid kind of blushes and says, "A hundred dollars, Mr Sinatra." Frank peels off two C-notes and says, "Here's two hundred. Have

a nice night." The young man is ecstatic. Frank, obviously proud of himself, says to the kid, "By the way, who tipped you the hundred bucks?" The kid says, "You, Mr Sinatra, when you were here last week."

BIG CAT MEETS A BIG DOG HANK HANEY / 05.05

► I have a dog named Chunk. He's a Bouvier and weighs 45 kilograms. When people come to my house, they see Chunk and immediately take a step backwards. When Chunk senses their fear, he starts growling. I always have to be there to make sure there's no disaster. I'd told Tiger I had a dog named Chunk and that he was size large – that was all I told him – and the first time he met him, I heard the door open from another room and thought, *Oh my God, Tiger's going to be torn apart*. I bolted into the room just as Tiger was saying "Hi, Chunk" and patting him on the head. Tiger doesn't have a lot of fear about anything. My dog licked Tiger's hand and went back to sleep. Tiger gets along with dogs like nobody I've ever seen.

RAISING TIGER EARL WOODS / 02.04

► Tiger and I were in our motel at a junior tournament. He was 11. Out of the blue he asked, "What's male menopause?" We talked about it for an hour. Then he asked, "What's the immigration policy of Australia?" That took another hour. Tiger then said, "Dad, what's . . ." I didn't let him finish. I put his butt in bed.

RYDER CUP CAPTAINCY TONY JACKLIN / 09.02

► The one thing I sought from my players was respect. Love was optional.

ONCE A KILLER . . . BILLY CASPER / 04.05

► I was at the Ryder Cup last year for a thing called the Captains Challenge. Former Ryder Cup captains stood on the tee of a par 3 and hit shots with the groups that came through. If the amateur hit it inside both captains, he got a new putter and a dozen balls. If he hit it inside one of us, he got a dozen balls. I



physical things can race like mad, but as long as you think slowly, you'll be OK. Once you learn to control your thinking, you'll welcome the adrenaline.

SPREAD THE SEEDS JACKIE BURKE JR / 05.04

► At the top of the backswing, imagine your right hand is filled with seeds. You want to spread those seeds on the ground evenly over as wide a distance as you can. Through impact, you can only disperse those seeds properly if you maintain an angle in your right wrist. If you flip your right wrist too soon, those seeds will fly up in your face or go anywhere but across the ground in front of you. I believe in throwing the club aggressively into the ball with your right hand, but you'll only get power and accuracy if you release the club as if you were spreading those seeds.

GOLF'S SPEED LIMIT BYRON NELSON / 05.03

► Swing the club as though you were driving 90km/h on the freeway. Not too fast, but not deathly slow. Once in a while, if the risk isn't great, you can push your swing to 110, but never go faster than that. At my best I could go 130 on occasion, but that's too fast for the average golfer.

FEEDBACK FROM PRACTICE PHIL RODGERS / 02.03

► Pay attention when you practise. The short game especially. Very few golfers actually watch how the ball is spinning, how high it's flying, where it lands on the green, how far it rolls. They rake another ball in front of them before the one they just hit is halfway to the hole. Concentrate. Watch the ball. The feedback will tell you what to do next.

OUTRAGEOUS GAMBLING DOUG FORD / 05.07

► After I turned pro, I was in a pro-am at Miami Beach, and there was a big calcutta. There was \$10,000 in the pot, but I wasn't entitled to any because the pros were playing for a small purse. When we went to tee off, I noticed one of my amateur partners looked awfully familiar. Turned out I'd won a pro-am in Detroit with him as a partner, with him playing off scratch. His handicap in Florida: 8. It turned out the other two guys were every bit as bad – or good, as the case might be. They both were excellent players but were getting a bunch of strokes. I holed my second shot on a short par 4 for an eagle, and it was the only time I helped

them all day. My father, who was following me, was horrified. "These guys are cheaters, Doug," he said. Was he ever right, but it's the job of whatever committee they had to enforce handicaps, not the players in the field. Still, the looks I was giving the guy must have made him nervous, because he sidled up to me and said, "Don't worry, we'll take care of you." Well, when it was over and they'd won the 10 grand without breaking a sweat, I'm standing in the clubhouse when the amateur walks by me, accompanied by a cop, and leaves the building. When the cop came back in alone, I asked him, "Did he just leave?" The cop said, "Yeah, and I should have let him get hit over the head in the carpark. He didn't even tip me." I'll tell you, Florida was a wild place.

TAKING UP THE GAME LATE LARRY NELSON / 05.08

► When I went to Florida, I knew very little about the rules and proper etiquette. In one tournament, I hit my ball down in a hazard. I went in and started picking up rocks, sticks and stuff so I could hit the ball. One of the guys I was playing with stood there, stunned. I started to pick up a leaf and said, "Can I move this leaf?" He stared at me for a minute and said, "If you pick up that leaf, you'll be lying 12."

NIGHTMARES TOM WATSON / 07.04

► I've had nightmares about golf. Who hasn't? I have two bad, recurring dreams. In one, I'm putting on a green that is cone-shaped, and the hole is at the top of the cone, so the ball either rolls back to my feet or goes past the crest and 30 feet away on the other side. In the other dream, I'm boxed in and don't have room to swing. Something vague is crowding me – the gallery maybe, or ropes, or something I can't pinpoint. I used to dream I was falling, which is the most common dream people have. That dream stopped. The golf dreams stayed.

HOUSE CHORES BUBBA WATSON / 04.13

► I'm a little embarrassed to admit it, but I don't change the light bulbs at home. I let Angie do that. For one thing, she's 6-foot-4, a little taller than me. But the main thing is, if the bulb broke and I cut my hand, I couldn't play golf. And that would be bad.

THE DAREDEVIL LYDIA KO / 03.14

► I tried bungee jumping in Queensland. There was water about 40 metres below. I'm terrified of heights, but I told myself, *Forty metres is nothing. It's a lob wedge.* They fastened me into the harness. I looked down, and the distance suddenly appeared more like a driver. But I worked up my courage, and I did it. Some time later, in Auckland, we visited the Sky Tower. It's the tallest structure in New Zealand. And what did they have there but bungee jumping. From almost 200 metres. That time, I passed. There's a big difference between 40 metres and 200 metres. There's also a big difference between water below and concrete.

PRACTICE AND LUCK GARY PLAYER / 10.02

► I was practising in a bunker down in Texas, and this good old boy with a big hat stopped to watch. The first shot he saw me hit went in the hole. He said, "You got 50 bucks if you knock the next one in." I holed the next one. Then he says, "You got \$100 if you hole the next one." In it went for three in a row. As he peeled off the notes he said, "Boy, I've never seen anyone so lucky in my life." And I shot back, "Well, the harder I practise, the luckier I get." That's where the quote originated.

THE WIZARD OF BANDON GRANT ROGERS / 09.13

► In every foursome, one person is always having the most fun. That person might as well be you. **G**



TAKING SAN

Why this iconic Gold Coast resort is still raising the bar ahead of its 30th birthday.
By **Evin Priest**



CTUARY



The seventh hole at Sanctuary Cove's The Palms course has a little bit of everything to stop you in your tracks.

THE golfing landscape has changed dramatically since Sanctuary Cove opened its doors in 1987, when it quickly became a doyen of the Australian golf resort industry. Golfers fell in love with the country's first fully integrated resort and its ideal setting among four man-made harbours on the Gold Coast's picturesque Coomera River. Add in two golf courses – one being Arnold Palmer's only Australian design – residential living, a five-star hotel and 300-berth marina and Sanctuary Cove's popularity is no mystery. In 2017, Sanctuary Cove will celebrate its 30-year anniversary, so AUSTRALIAN GOLF DIGEST visited the Gold Coast resort to see how it stacks up in the modern Australian golf world.

The Pines Course

The legendary Arnold Palmer chose Sanctuary Cove to be his only Australian golf course design. The seven-time Major winner was drawn to the foundations – 101 hectares of pine forest – as well as the opportunity to route holes through groups of pine trees and around six large man-made lakes. These water hazards are a feature of the course – to the eye and the scorecard – and come into play on 14 holes.

The Pines reflects a lot of The King's personality – it requires brute strength, a lot of shots played in the air and there are certainly shades of the tree-lined seclusion seen at Augusta National, where Palmer enjoyed the most of his Major championship success.

What takes the golfer at first is the sheer beauty of the towering pines framing most holes, and the picturesque pine straw at their bases. That combination makes for some

spectacular and intimidating tee shots. Again, these reflect Palmer's aggressive style in that golfers are invited to take risky lines, only to get to the ball and realise the rough cuts in and out of the fairway edges.

The front nine is fairly tame until you arrive at two of the highlights – the enjoyable par-4 sixth, which demands an accurate drive before a short water carry to a tiered green guarded by bunkers. The par-3 seventh also requires a large water carry to a green dissected by a ridge.

The stretch from the eighth to the 11th is regarded as one of the most difficult of any Australian resort course, with two brutally long par 5s, both longer than 530 metres, and

two tough par 4s measuring more than 430m. Another test is on hand at the course's most photographed hole – the 201m, par-3 13th. A 200m water carry to a tiered and heavily-bunkered green.

The Pines has a course rating of 74 from the black tees and 72 from the blue. It slipped out of the top 50 on the AUSTRALIAN GOLF DIGEST Top 100 rankings, to No.52. However, the course is in great condition as it eyes a return to the No.25 ranking it boasted in 2008.

The Palms Course

While The Pines is exclusive to members and InterContinental Sanctuary Cove



Sand features heavily on the fifth hole at The Pines.

OUR TIP

During your stay at the InterContinental Sanctuary Cove, be sure to check out the one-acre saltwater beach lagoon pool. Beautiful white sand, lighting in the pool and gardens and a line of tiki torches along the edge of the water all make for a stunning nighttime setting. Personalised events can be enhanced with fireworks, a stage built in the middle of the lagoon pool and marquee on the far lagoon lawn.

Resort guests, the Palms is open to the public. Originally designed by Fred Bolton, The Palms is receiving good reviews since undergoing an \$8.8 million redesign in 2011 by renowned architect Ross Watson. The changes were immediately justified when The Palms debuted on the AUSTRALIAN GOLF DIGEST Top 100 courses ranking at 77. It then jumped to No.63 on the biennial rankings in 2014, 11 places behind The Pines – its more popular counterpart. The majority of the course is brand new, besides a small portion of the original routing that remains. Watson breathed life into the course with the tees, greens and bunkers completely overhauled.

Another reason for its surge in popularity is the fact it is a lot more forgiving than The Pines – at least from tee to green. Tee shots are far more open, with wider fairways and rough populated by palm trees that offer less challenging escapes, as well as some holes that allow high handicappers to miss a fairway over.

The new routing is set among century-old Cabbage Palms and features short par 4s with plenty of character. The course bears its teeth in the form of deep greenside bunkering and

green complexes with tough contours that demand precise iron play – and a sound long putting game.

At 5,904m off the championship tees, The Palms is not overly long but compensates with plenty of water hazards and sharp doglegs. Tee placements have been designed to suit a variety of playing conditions and golfers of all abilities.


Work and Play

Sanctuary Cove Golf and Country Club is fast becoming a popular destination for corporate golf days, with a dedicated corporate golf co-ordinator tailoring business outings to individual clients. Guests are always impressed when they receive a Sanctuary Cove tag on arrival, as well as the convenience of a bag drop service and personalised nameplates. These highly professional days offer corporate merchandise, teaching clinics conducted by PGA professionals and a wide range of food and beverage options.

Enjoy your stay

Sanctuary Cove offers one of the best stay-and-play packages on the Gold Coast, with 243 guest rooms and suites available at the InterContinental Sanctuary Cove Resort. From the luxurious Classic rooms and suites to the magnificent Manor Suite for brides, accommodation at the InterContinental Sanctuary Cove caters for family vacations, romantic getaways, meetings and events. Best of all, they're nestled among a picturesque setting featuring fountains, gardens, a marina and two golf courses. For those not wanting to tee it up on The Pines or Palms layouts, there



is a range of pamper treatments available at the Champions Hair Beauty Day Spa. The InterContinental Sanctuary Cove's location is also ideal as the famous theme parks and beaches of the Gold Coast are only a short drive away. 

THE DETAILS

Sanctuary Cove Golf and Country Club
The Parkway, Hope Island QLD 4212
Ph: (07) 5699 9000
E-mail: pinesgolf@scgcc.com.au
Web: sanctuarycovegolfclub.com.au

‘Water hazards are a feature of The Pines course at Sanctuary Cove – to the eye and the scorecard – and come into play on 14 holes’



START FINISH

A man with dark hair and a friendly smile is the central figure. He is wearing a red, textured zip-up sweater over a red turtleneck and white trousers. He holds a golf club with both hands, the club head pointing downwards. The background is a plain, light grey. Large, bold, dark blue letters spell out 'START' at the top and 'FINISH' in the middle, partially obscuring the man's face and torso.

FOCUS ON YOUR DRIVING & PUTTING

A man with dark hair, smiling, wearing a red textured sweater over a red turtleneck. He is holding a golf club with both hands. The background is a plain, light grey.

LONG, STRONG

TO GET **BETTER FASTER** / BY **TONY FINAU**

WITH MAX ADLER



YOU DRIVE AND PUTT WELL, you're going to have a pretty easy day. Not to discount the importance of iron play or chipping, but starting and finishing holes well is how you write a lot of small numbers on your scorecard. I also think these skills are related because they're the simplest shots: The tee box and the green are the only places you get ball in hand. Plus, your goals are straightforward – any part of the fairway or cup will do. ► More than other aspects of the game, becoming a good driver and putter is about learning to be automatic. With approach shots there's a lot to think about. You're factoring multiple yardages and guessing how the lie might affect impact. Chipping and bunker shots allow even more room for creativity and club selection. But on drives and putts you train your mind and body to do the same thing over and over without thinking too much. Here's my approach for the tee and the green, with nothing in between.

DRIVE IT LIKE A KID

I'm fortunate to be built as I am (6-foot-4, 91 kilograms). A good drive for me carries 290 metres. I don't lift weights. I do a lot of stretching to stay supple and pride myself on being able to smoothly dial back my distance when a hole demands it. I also hit a 3-wood and 18-degree driving iron a fair amount. My driving iron goes about 240.

Must be nice, you're probably thinking. Well, I know what it's like to be short, too.

The first hole at the course where my brother and I grew up, a par-3 called Jordan River in Salt Lake City, was 148 metres. There was a hump halfway to the green. For the longest time, I couldn't get my tee shot over that hump. The first time I cleared it – with a hybrid, because Dad hadn't bought Gipper and me drivers yet – I was 8 years old. The ball disappeared, went like 80 metres total, and I thought, *I'm a man now*.

I tell you this story because remembering how it feels to be a kid is a great trick for any golfer to get loose over the ball. I love how tension-free kids are when they waggle. It's like they're all coordination and no muscle. And when you're young, you don't think about things like head position or shoulder alignment. Fairways look a mile wide, so you pretty much whip the driver as fast as you can without falling over.

On the US PGA Tour, it doesn't take much of a spray to miss a fairway, especially when you're

looking as far down them as I do. That's when I try to pretend I'm a kid again. I just see a target, like the crest of a hill, and go for it. I'm not used to hitting every fairway, so I don't panic when I miss one.

I also played a lot of basketball growing up. Often I've heard teachers say the correct golf stance feels like you're guarding someone on defence. That's a good tip, but you have to understand how to guard. You don't lock your knees and get tight and antsy. You constantly stay moving, fluid and relaxed, almost like you're dancing.

Boyd Summerhays, my coach, says that a tight mind leads to a tight body. The reverse is also true. That's why my other key to staying loose is to always set the club first. Only when the clubface is looking at the target do I then bring my feet in and square my hips and shoulders. I see too many amateurs take their stance before they get the club into position. So they stand still that much longer before hitting the shot, and that gives them too much time to freeze up.

Though it might disappoint some spectators at the range, before a round I rarely hit more than 10 drivers. Partly, I'm conserving energy, but more importantly, I'm visualising certain holes on the course and giving myself one chance to hit each tee shot. Hopefully I hit them well and can call on those positive feelings later on.

Of course, when I played Jordan River last year, I didn't need more than pitching wedge on any of the holes. But I still had to make some putts.

MY PUTTING TRIGGER IS

A FORWARD PRESS.

OTHERS RAISE THE PUTTER

OR EVEN TAP THEIR TOES

PUTT LIKE A BIG MAN

Because of my length, I've always felt underrated as a putter. That's OK: Better to have a reputation for something than nothing. In high school basketball I was the big man hanging underneath the hoop, and I think all the time there helped me develop touch and craftiness.

If I could summarise my approach to putting in one word, it would be "speed." I believe that on an ideal putt the ball trickles in on its last rotation. That's why I always read the maximum amount of break. A lot of guys out here talk about ramming putts into the back of the cup. They'll tell you perfect speed is when you give it enough that the ball would roll 18 to 24 inches past. I think that's too much.

Psychologically, you might feel better knowing you gave it a healthy chance, but at that pace you're going to lip out a lot. If the ball's rolling 10 inches or fewer by the cup, you catch any piece of it, low side or high side, and the ball can fall in. It's the same principle in basketball: Soft-handed layups tend to find the net even if they bounce around the rim a bit first.

When I arrive to the practice green, I always drop two balls and putt to the nearest hole. I don't care what the length is or if I make either; I'm only trying to tune in the speed. If you always start at a predetermined distance, like three or four feet,

your stroke can be rigid because you'll be trying too hard to putt the ball straight from the outset. If you focus only on the speed, you'll find it easier to hit it straight.

I've talked to other right-handed tour players who say they try to slightly push right-to-left breaking putts and slightly pull left-to-right breaking putts. The idea being, you aim straighter – say, right edge instead of a ball out – and then roll the ball counter to the break with a little push. I don't know about you, but I think that's way too complicated.

I'd rather have a clear head, and that's why it's essential to have a trigger. I putt with a lot of forward press, pushing my hands towards the target to initiate the motion. So the moment my hands shift, that's my cue to begin the stroke and let my mind just go blank. At that point, I've either practised enough hours to have a sound stroke, or I haven't. Last-second manipulations usually don't work out. I've seen other good putters who raise the clubhead off the ground to start or even tap their toes. Any little movement like that helps.

After you make the putt, take out your driver and enjoy the walk to the next tee.

If you really smash one, you'll have that putter back in your hands before you know it. **G**

TONY FINAU ranks seventh on the US PGA Tour in driving distance and second in total birdies.

REMEMBERING HOW IT FEELS

TO BE A KID IS A GREAT TRICK

TO GET LOOSE OVER THE BALL



“Make a fairway wider by using the slope to your advantage.”

Get in the Zone

Shape your drive to fit the landing area

ONE tee shot that really unsettles golfers is a dogleg that bends in the opposite direction of their natural shot shape. For example, No. 18 at Muirfield Village [shown] poses a dilemma to the right-handed golfer whose stock shot is a draw.

If you're a draw player on this hole, you could go with your usual ball flight, using the rationale you're most likely to produce a solid strike with the swing you know. Or you might try the shot you don't play as much, a fade, because it allows a larger margin of error in finding the fairway.

Rather than going on gut instinct, learn to look at landing areas critically. Then you can apply the best strategy for you.

—WITH MAX ADLER



LONGEST: TURN IT OFF THE RIGHT

With the fairway tilted left, any tee shot with a right-to-left flight must be more accurate. A ball with draw spin that lands too far to the left can kick hard and end up wet. The safer landing area is the right half of the fairway. It's risky, but a draw poses a distance reward: A ball hooking in from the right uses the fairway's slope to get more rollout. But this can get you in more trouble than the reward is worth.

IDEAL: HIT A FADE FOR CONTROL

On this hole, the fairway slopes to the left, towards the creek, so left-to-right shots that land in the short grass will settle quickly and stay there. Because the water is the worst miss, it's nice to watch a drive bend away from it. The most intelligent golf is played into a slope.

By this I mean, the golfer looking for control tries to pitch the ball into slopes that kill rollout, limiting bad bounces.

SAFEST: LAY UP WITH A 3-WOOD

The most prudent play is to select the club that shifts your landing zone short of where the fairway turns. Then you can forget about trajectory and just focus on hitting it solid. You'll have a longer approach and your view of the green could be obscured by something on the corner (a tree), but playing short gives you the widest berth.

RESTORING THE CHALLENGE

Modern drivers are engineered to be anti-slice, so they're hard to fade. Some of today's golfers can't really work the ball left to right. I recently added 36 metres to this back tee because players at the Memorial were bombing drives directly over the bunkers. Now the hole tips out at 443m, so no one can dodge the question this tee shot asks.



Come to Grips

Simple steps
for getting your
hands on right

I SEE a lot of amateurs holding the club too tightly. I notice it most when they try to waggle. The movement looks stiff and short. To swing correctly, the right amount of grip pressure – and where you apply it – is important.

You should feel the club being supported by the last three fingers of your left hand (*above, left*). Those fingers should grip the firmest. My longtime teacher, the late Stan Thirsk, used to remind me to keep the club in the fingers of my left hand and never let it slip into the palm.

In the right hand, the middle two fingers do most of the work. The forefinger and thumb of the right hand should feel relaxed. In fact, I've seen many great players, including Ben Hogan and Fred Couples, practise with those two fingers clear off the club (*above, right*).

Back to waggling. With softer grip pressure, your waggle will be looser and will help relax your hands and arms.

During the swing, the right hand should be free enough to fire the clubhead through the hitting area.

ELEMENTARY WATSON

 When it comes to gripping the club, how tight is too tight? Here's an exercise: Next time you practise, try backing off with your grip pressure until the club is almost falling out of your hands. Then firm it up just enough so you can control the club. That likely is your ideal grip pressure. Will it feel lighter? I'm guessing it will.

Tom Watson
is a Golf Digest Teaching Professional.

CHODT CAM STUNT UAWID

THE SECRET MOVE FOR HITTING EVERY GREENSIDE SHOT



ROAD MAD ROAD MAD

BY MICHAEL BREED



With the Whitestone Bridge in the background, Michael Breed chips on the 17th hole at Trump Golf Links at Ferry Point in New York City.





LET ME GUESS: You have trouble making solid contact on simple chips and pitches. Seems ridiculous, right? You've played enough golf that you should own these little shots. But you don't. And you know what – neither does just about every amateur golfer out there.

Why is this? It's not hard to explain, actually. Hitting these shots fat or thin means the low point of your swing arc is coming behind the ball. You're bottoming out too soon. That much you might know. What I bet you don't know is, that low point falls back because of something you probably *try* to do: Swing your hands out towards the target. It's logical enough. You want to hit the ball there, so you swing your hands there. But that move is destroying your short game.

I'll explain what happens in a minute, but I don't want to wait to tell you how easy this is to fix. All you have to do to start making perfect contact is swing the grip end of the club to the left through impact, towards your left hip. If you do that, the swing bottom moves in front of the ball so you catch it on the downswing for a crisp strike. It also helps you maintain the loft on the clubface for a predictable trajectory and roll. And as you'll see, the more you swing the handle left, the higher you hit the ball.

I know it sounds simplistic, but it works – and we'll look at why. But one more thing: If you fight a slice in your full swing, you already swing the club the way I want you to. You're steep into the ball and swinging left through impact. That's the secret to a great short game.

—WITH PETER MORRICE



NO

WHY THIS SWING DOESN'T WORK

● This is the swing most golfers make on short shots: a push towards the target. Picture you're in your setup holding a Hula-Hoop at a 45-degree angle so it touches the ground where the ball would be. Now shift the hoop so it's angled to the right and notice the point where it meets the ground moves back. That's what happens if you push the handle out instead of letting it swing inside. It drops the low point back so you hit shots fat or thin.

When the handle swings straight through impact, the clubhead actually goes to the right. That's because the hands swing on a smaller arc around the body than the clubhead does; it takes longer for the clubhead to turn left. Pushing the handle towards the target might feel straight, but it's forcing the clubhead to the right [above]. If you happen to catch the ball solid, you'll hit it right. But the big issue is the low point, which is behind the ball.

ILLUSTRATIONS: MARK MATCHO

YES

WHY THIS SWING DOES WORK

● I understand the instinct to swing the clubhead out towards the target – you're trying to hit the ball straight. But to move the clubhead straight through impact, you have to swing the handle to the left. Because of the angle of the shaft to the ground and the bigger arc the clubhead makes around your body, the clubhead is always moving more to the right than the handle is. To swing it straight, the handle has to go left [*below*].

The other thing swinging the handle left

does is make the swing steep, then shallow – and that's what you want in the short game. It's steep coming down and then shallows out as it goes through. Picture this: When your hands get back in front of your belt buckle on the downswing, if they start pulling left, the bottom of the shaft kicks outward and moves the clubhead out over the target line. To keep the clubhead tracking down that line, the handle has to continue going left. That's how you hit the ball solid and straight.



**EXIT LEFT
TO HIT IT
STRAIGHT**

T

The more you swing the handle to the left through impact, the higher the ball goes. Why? When the handle moves abruptly to the left, the loft on the clubface increases because the shaft is not leaning towards the target as much as when the handle goes farther down the line. More left equals more loft. Consider this image: You're driving down a highway and you have three consecutive exits on the left. If the handle takes the first exit, an abrupt left turn, the shot goes the highest. If it takes the middle exit, you hit a standard shot. The third left is the lowest shot. It's a great visual.

**'TO MAKE
THE CLUBHEAD
GO TOWARDS
THE TARGET,
YOU HAVE TO
SWING THE
HANDLE LEFT.'**





HOW TO THE SETUP AND SWING FOR HIGH AND LOW SHOTS

First, let's look at ball position. There is no absolute here, but I'm sure you want to know where to play the ball. As a rule, I like it in the middle. I also like a square stance, with the toes parallel to the target line. Most golfers stand open on greenside shots, and that's usually a reaction to the ball going right when they try to swing straight.

How high you hold the handle is the critical setup element. If you hold it high, you set up a low shot because you promote a more gradually curving swing arc – picture the handle tracing the shape of an oval. That

gradual arc produces a little forward lean of the shaft at impact (and less loft) for a lower flight. If you set the handle lower, you pre-set a more circular swing arc. That abrupt arc produces less shaft lean at impact for a higher shot.

The backswing shape and wrist hinge – two commonly discussed factors – are not critical. No matter your backswing position, if you pull the handle left coming down, the clubhead is thrown into a position where it can come down sharply on the ball. Only the length of the backswing is important, as that determines how far or high you hit the shot.

So focus on handle height. High handle for low shots; low handle for high shots. If you lower the handle, adjust your body to accommodate the club: Widen your stance, bend your knees more. Let the clubhead find its balance as you lower the handle – the face will open. Whatever handle height you start with, feel as if you maintain it as you swing.

In short, a lower handle naturally swings through more to the left. Seve Ballesteros used to call this quick-left exit “putting it in the holster” because the butt of the grip ends up near the left-front pocket [above].

DRILLS

SWING YOUR HANDS ON A HULA-HOOP

Let's take a breath here. I realise this is a departure from the way you think about short-game shots. That's why practice drills are important. You have to get out of the habit of swinging the handle in the same direction you want to hit the ball. Once you do that, your short game will improve immediately.

Here's a great drill for practising the motion

required to hit a high pitch shot. Place a Hula-Hoop on the ground and stand inside it with your toes close to the hoop. Make some slow practice swings watching your hands track along the circular arc going through [below]. This is a pretty abrupt radius for the swing, so this motion will produce a quick-left exit, the kind that leads to a higher ball flight.



BLOCK THE STRAIGHT SWING

Try this drill to groove the basic motion of exiting left. Grip a wedge in your right hand only and hold out your left arm at about a 30-degree angle to your stance line. Practise swinging the club back and through without bumping into your left arm [left]. The arm is a barrier that will force you to swing the handle in towards your body rather than out towards the target on the through-swing. You'll feel the club "turning the corner" to the left.



**LEARN TO
PARK IT IN
THE GARAGE**



What's great about this instruction is, it gives you a destination for the swing, an end point. With any swing, if you can get in the correct position at the finish, you'll do a lot of things well without thinking about them. Years ago I played at Augusta National with Raymond Floyd, who was the best of his time around the greens. He told me he thought a lot about sticking the finish, called it "parking the car in the garage." I love that. If you think about parking the handle to the left, you'll make consistent contact and have a dream short-game.

Michael Breed hosts "The Golf Fix" on Golf Channel and teaches at Trump Golf Links at Ferry Point in New York City.

FOOTJOY shirt,
shoes
TITLEIST
hat, glove
ANTAS pants, belt
OMEGA De Ville watch



My 60-metre Solution

Swing shorter and hit it with authority

MOST golfers hate partial wedge shots because they don't have a good plan for playing them. They tend to make too big a backswing and then have to decel at impact to avoid smashing the ball over the green. When you slow down like that, everything gets out of sync, which makes it tough to catch the ball solid.

The secret to these shots is making a shorter, wider backswing [below, left], so you can accelerate through the ball. You want to be able to rotate your torso and swing your arms

faster on the downswing – that's an athletic move that produces more consistent results. When everything moves through the shot together, you can make a firm strike and not worry about putting too much on it.

I tell my students who struggle with these shots to commit to this phrase: "Wide back, accelerate through." Get your body facing the target at the finish and your arms farther through than they went back [below, right].

To do that with confidence, the key is a shorter backswing.

BUTCH'S BASICS

When you have to hit a wedge shot high, I bet you hang on your back foot and try to help the ball up – catching it fat or thin. You need to get your weight forward as you swing through. Start with more weight on your front foot. Then swing back, and shift to the target coming down. At the finish, check that you're using your back foot only as a balance point.

Butch Harmon is a Golf Digest Teaching Professional.



GO BACK WIDE

A compact swing with your arms extended is better than long and loose.

TURN THROUGH

When your arms and body go through together, you'll make better contact.

Bubba hits it on the upswing and averages 302 in the air.



Bigger Drives

Give the ball an uppercut to hit your best tee shots ever

TO MAXIMISE driving distance, long-ball hitters like Bubba Watson [above] catch the ball on the upswing. Sweeping it off the tee increases the distance the ball stays in the air and reduces backspin, so it rolls more when it lands. This is the same approach to the driver I use when teaching my new A Swing. All you need to do is make some easy adjustments to hit longer drives. Follow these steps.

David Leadbetter, author of *The A Swing*, operates 24 golf academies worldwide.

1. TILT BEHIND THE BALL



► Address the ball so it's in line with your left heel, and widen your stance beyond shoulder width. Your spine should be tilted away from the target, and your sternum behind the ball. Also, make sure the shaft is not leaning towards the target.

2. SMOOTH TO THE TOP



► Rhythm is the key to consistency, so it's important to put some flow into your backswing. Use your core muscles to start the club back, and try to keep your arms relaxed as you swing to the top. Don't let anxiety cause you to rush.

3. DON'T LUNGE FORWARD



► At the start of the downswing, resist the urge to shift all of your weight towards the target. You need to keep your upper body behind the ball to hit up on it. Feel as if some of your weight is still supported by your back foot during the downswing.

4. THRUST UP AT IMPACT



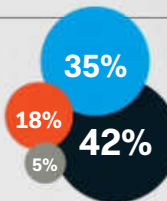
► Thrust your lower body upwards as you swing into the ball. Your torso will tilt farther away from the target, and you'll be a little taller than you were at address. This thrust causes the arms to extend so you can hit up on the ball with some real power.



What shot is the hardest to get out of your head?

- The shank
- Missed two-footer
- Topped drive
- Bunker chunk

SOURCE: GOLF DIGEST READERS



Shank-Proof Your Swing

Learn to return the club to its setup position

WHEN somebody sends me a tweet during a round looking for help, I know it's pretty serious. And a lot of times the subject is a shank.

The classic shank comes when the clubhead gets farther away from you at impact than it was at address, or you move closer to the ball during the swing. As a result, the ball hits off the hosel and darts sideways.

Start by getting the right distance from the ball. Your arms should hang from your shoulders – not reach – and you should keep the body posture that creates throughout the swing. To avoid moving towards the ball or swinging your arms out, use my obstacle drill [*left, inset*].

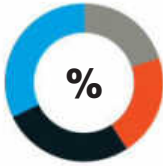
Hank Haney is based at the Hank Haney Golf Ranch, Lewisville, Texas. To get fixed in Golf Digest, send Hank your swing on Twitter: @HankDHaney.



DON'T BUMP THE HEADCOVER

Hit some iron shots, or make practice swings, with a headcover just outside the toe of your club. Miss the cover, and you'll miss the hosel on the other side. Your contact will move back towards the centre.





What shot would you want to hit with your golf hero watching?

- ▶ Chip: 20%
- ▶ Putt: 21%
- ▶ Drive: 27%
- ▶ Approach: 32%

SOURCE: GOLF DIGEST READERS



How to Play Tougher

Block out bad stuff with the power of intention

THERE are a lot of bullies on the golf course. Bunkers, water hazards, tall trees, high grass – you name it. The more you focus on those bullies, the more they mess with your head, and the worse you play. So how do you ignore them? I have a method that has helped everyone from tour players to 25-handicappers. I want you to use the power of intention.

What I mean by that is, before each shot go through your normal checklist, determining distance, wind direction, elevation change – all the usual variables. Then focus on what you want the ball to do and where you want it to end up. But here's the most important part: Once you've done that, try to hit the shot with as much bravery as you can muster. If you do that,

your intention will divert from all the bad stuff out there and channel towards the execution.

In short, make a plan for the shot, stick to it, and accept the consequences. Don't let yourself be a slave to the result. Whatever happens, just start the process over again with the next shot.

Sean Foley is based at Orange County National near Orlando.

THINK YOUNG PLAY HARD



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Long-Distance Relationship

Are you getting along with your fairway woods? Try my keys

BY J.B. HOLMES



I KNOW a lot of amateurs lower their expectations on approach shots from 180-plus metres. Granted, your odds of hitting a green from out there are never great, but my advice on fairway woods will help. Start with this drill: Practise making controlled swings that allow you to finish in balance like I am here. That's the tempo you want. Treat it like you were swinging an iron to a specific distance. If a shot is too long for a 7-iron, you hit a 6. Same thinking here: Every fairway wood has a distance limit. Don't stretch it. – WITH RON KASPRISKE

“To hit a cut, set up with your feet and shoulders open.”

**GO LEFT TO RIGHT
FOR CONSISTENCY**

I like to fade or cut the ball, which I recommend for you because making a swing that curves a shot left to right seems easier to repeat for most golfers. It also will help you hit the ball higher, which comes in handy on long shots over obstacles like bunkers or water.

To hit a cut, set up with your feet and shoulders open, or aligned left of your target. Then make a swing where your body rotates significantly towards the target before the club reaches the ball. I can't emphasise this enough: Keep turning all the way to the finish. If your body stops and your arms and club keep swinging, you'll hit it dead left.

J.B. Holmes has four wins on the US PGA Tour, including the 2015 Shell Houston Open.

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A male golfer in a light blue polo shirt, grey trousers, and a white Srixon cap is in a ready stance on a green golf course. He is holding a driver, and a white tee marker is visible on the grass in front of him. The background shows a line of trees and a cloudy sky.

SETUP

Ball position is important for solid contact. It should be forward of centre in your stance – but not quite up to where you play a driver.

The golfer is in the middle of his backswing. His left arm is extended, and his right arm is bent, holding the driver high. A white tee marker is on the grass. The background is the same golf course with trees and a cloudy sky.

BACKSWING

Swing back until you feel the muscles around your left shoulder stretched. Wherever that is, that's your top of the backswing.

The golfer is in the middle of his downswing. His left hip is shifted towards the target, and his right arm is bent, holding the driver. A white tee marker is on the grass. The background is the same golf course with trees and a cloudy sky.

DOWNSWING

Bump your left hip towards the target as you start down. This shallows the club's path and keeps it to the inside. It'll help get the ball up.

The golfer is at the point of impact. The club head is in contact with the ball, and his body is in a powerful, compact position. A white tee marker is on the grass. The background is the same golf course with trees and a cloudy sky.

IMPACT

The club should still be descending at impact and should stay low to the ground just after. The key here: Keep turning through.

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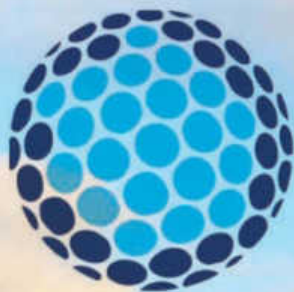
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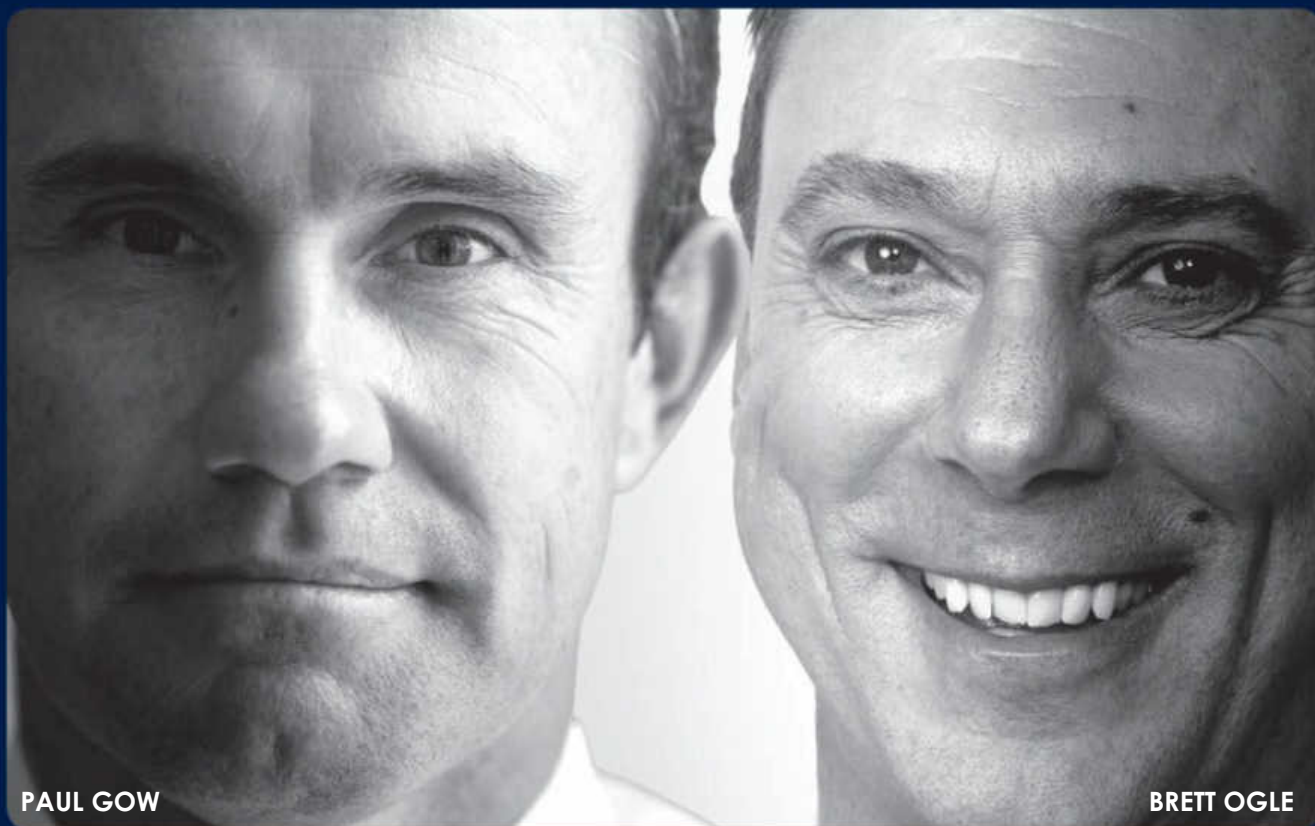
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JAN 21

European Tour: Abu Dhabi Championship – Round 1, 4.30 pm LIVE

JAN 22

US PGA Tour: Carebuilder Challenge – Round 1, 7.00 am LIVE

European Tour: Abu Dhabi Championship – Round 2, 4.30 pm LIVE

JAN 23

US PGA Tour: Carebuilder Challenge – Round 2, 7.00 am LIVE

Champions: Mitsubishi Championship – Round 1, 11.30 am LIVE

European Tour: Abu Dhabi Championship – Round 3, 8.00 pm LIVE

JAN 24

US PGA Tour: Carebuilder Challenge – Round 3, 7.00 am LIVE

Champions: Mitsubishi Championship – Round 2, 11.30 am LIVE

European Tour: Abu Dhabi Championship – Final Round, 7.30 pm LIVE

JAN 25

US PGA Tour: Carebuilder Challenge – Final Round, 7.00 am LIVE

Champions: Mitsubishi Championship – Final Round, 11.00 am LIVE

JAN 27

European Tour: Qatar Masters – Round 1, 5.30 pm LIVE

JAN 28

Asian Tour: Singapore Open – Round 1, 4.00 pm LIVE

European Tour: Qatar Masters – Round 2, 5.30 pm LIVE

JAN 29

LPGA Tour: Bahamas Classic – Round 1, 3.30 am LIVE

US PGA Tour: Farmers Insurance Open – Round 1, 7.00 am LIVE

Asian Tour: Singapore Open – Round 2, 4.00 pm LIVE

European Tour: Qatar Masters – Round 3, 8.30 pm LIVE

JAN 30

LPGA Tour: Bahamas Classic – Round 2, 3.30 am LIVE

US PGA Tour: Farmers Insurance Open – Round 2, 7.00 am LIVE

Asian Tour: Singapore Open – Round 3, 3.00 pm LIVE

European Tour: Qatar Masters – Final Round, 8.30 pm LIVE

JAN 31

US PGA Tour: Farmers Insurance Open – Round 3, 7.00 am LIVE

LPGA Tour: Bahamas Classic – Round 3, 7.00 am LIVE

Asian Tour: Singapore Open – Final Round, 3.00 pm LIVE

FEB 1

US PGA Tour: Farmers Insurance Open – Final Round, 5.00 am LIVE

LPGA Tour: Bahamas Classic – Final Round, 7.00 am LIVE

FEB 2

The Golf Show, TBA

FEB 4

LPGA Tour: Coates Championship – Round 1, 6.00 am LIVE

European Tour: Dubai Desert Classic – Round 1, 5.00 pm LIVE

FEB 5

LPGA Tour: Coates Championship – Round 2, 2.30 am LIVE

US PGA Tour: Phoenix Open – Round 1, 7.00 am LIVE

European Tour: Dubai Desert Classic – Round 2, 5.00 pm LIVE

FEB 6

US PGA Tour: Phoenix Open – Round 2, 7.00 am LIVE

LPGA Tour: Coates Championship – Round 3, 10.00 am DELAY

Champions: Allianz Championship – Round 1, 11.30 am DELAY

European Tour: Dubai Desert Classic – Round 3, 8.00 pm LIVE

FEB 7

US PGA Tour: Phoenix Open – Round 3, 5.00 am LIVE

LPGA Tour: Coates Championship – Final Round, 7.00 am LIVE

Champions: Allianz Championship – Round 2, 10.00 am DELAY

European Tour: Dubai Desert Classic – Final Round, 8.00 pm LIVE

FEB 8

US PGA Tour: Phoenix Open – Final Round, 5.00 am LIVE

Champions: Allianz Championship – Final Round, 10.00 am DELAY

FEB 9

The Golf Show, TBA

FEB 11

European Tour: Tshwane Open – Round 1, 7.30 pm LIVE

FEB 12

US PGA Tour: Pebble Beach – Round 1, 7.00 am LIVE

European Tour: Tshwane Open – Round 2, 7.30 pm LIVE

FEB 13

Champions: ACE Classic – Round 1, 4.30 am LIVE

US PGA Tour: Pebble Beach – Round 2, 7.00 am LIVE

European Tour: Tshwane Open – Round 3, 9.30 pm LIVE

FEB 14

US PGA Tour: Pebble Beach – Round 3, 5.00 am LIVE

Champions: ACE Classic – Round 2, 7.00 am LIVE

European Tour: Tshwane Open – Final Round, 9.00 pm LIVE

FEB 15

US PGA Tour: Pebble Beach – Final Round, 5.00 am LIVE

Champions: ACE Classic – Final Round, 7.00 am LIVE

FEB 16

The Golf Show, TBA

FEB 18

European Tour: Malaysian Open – Round 1, 2.00 pm LIVE

LPGA: Honda Thailand – Round 1, 5.00 pm LIVE

FEB 19

US PGA Tour: Northern Trust Open – Round 1, 9.00 am LIVE

European Tour: Malaysian Open – Round 2, 2.00 pm LIVE

LPGA: Honda Thailand – Round 2, 5.00 pm LIVE

FEB 20

US PGA Tour: Northern Trust Open – Round 2, 9.00 am LIVE

European Tour: Malaysian Open – Round 3, 2.00 pm LIVE

LPGA: Honda Thailand – Round 3, 5.00 pm LIVE

FEB 21

US PGA Tour: Northern Trust Open – Round 3, 5.00 am LIVE

European Tour: Malaysian Open – Final Round, 1.30 pm LIVE

LPGA: Honda Thailand – Final Round, 5.00 pm LIVE

FEB 22

US PGA Tour: Northern Trust Open – Final Round, 5.00 am LIVE

FEB 23

The Golf Show, TBA

FEB 26

US PGA Tour: Honda Classic – Round 1, 6.00 am LIVE

FEB 27

US PGA Tour: Honda Classic – Round 2, 6.00 am LIVE

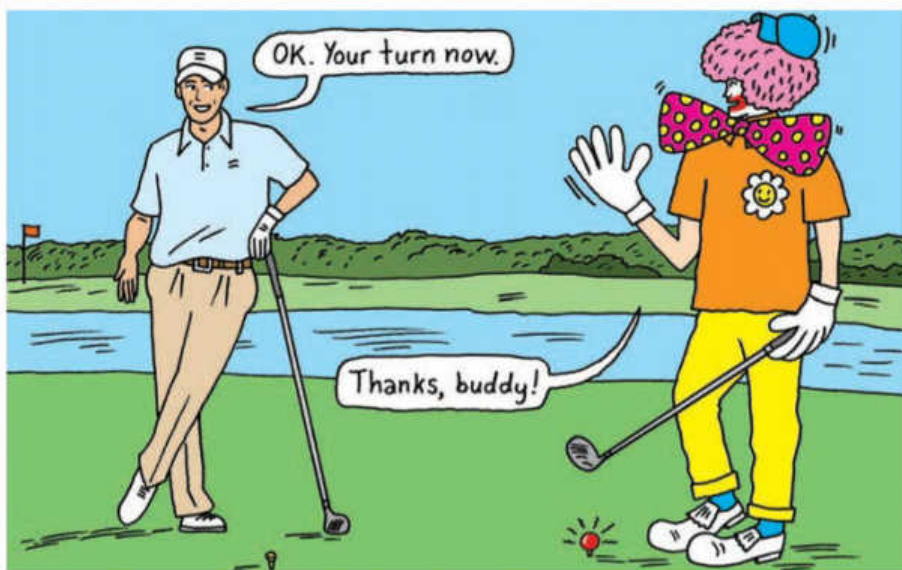
FEB 28

US PGA Tour: Honda Classic – Round 3, 5.00 am LIVE

FEB 29

US PGA Tour: Honda Classic – Final Round, 5.00 am LIVE





How to Be a Great Golf Partner

BY BOB CARNEY

0 UR friend **Dean Knuth**, a statistical genius known as the Pope of Slope, once suggested a formula for choosing a partner: Find someone who balances your tendencies. If you're Steady Eddie, play with Wild Willy, and so forth. OK, but that's only half of it. Our Handy Guide to Golf Partnering is what you need for the rest.

1 You believe in the team when no sensible person would. See "Titans fan."

The essential characteristic of a great partner is hope. A steady diet of "Why do we do this to ourselves?" or "I'd be better off repainting my cupola" isn't what you're after. You'd much rather hear, "We're close," even if it evokes laughter. I have a friend who dispenses with score and counts "LVs," or Little Victories: a great escape from the woods, a nifty bunker shot. He's a smiler. You're like him. You keep mood and score separate.



2 You're no teacher. And never impersonate one. You'd love to tell your friend and partner he's swinging at, oh, 100 kilometres per hour faster than normal, but you don't because you're a good partner. You wait for him to inquire, after multiple doubles: "You see anything?" And then, in your best Butch Harmon voice, you reply: "Just a hairrrrrrrrr quick." That's it; no analysis. You're also an expert

in biting your tongue about your game. Your partner never hears you say: "I'm setting the angle way too soon . . ." I'll give you the angle.

3 You forget with the best. You remember only the best. You expect the same. A new study reveals that marathoners quickly forget the anguish of their runs. "This helps to explain," says the study's author, "why people run marathons again and again in spite of pain." This forgetfulness also applies to childbirth. (See where we're headed?) In golf, amnesia is oxygen. Beware the partner who says, "I'd love to play with you again if you'll get some help with your putting." He's a rememberer. You, on the other hand, are known for uttering the most perfect sentence in the history of golf companionship: "I can't remember ever seeing you miss a putt that counted."

4 You're on the same page when it really counts. A lot of golfers are Bermudas-wearing judgement machines. They're experts on

5 You take it seriously, but not too seriously. Golf's fun, kind of.

Maybe you're not a joke-teller, though it's a plus if you are. You simply get that our golf games are often the joke. One time my brother and I were playing modified alternate shot in a member-guest. For seven holes, I'd hit the green, he'd hit the first putt four feet past. On the eighth hole I made a hole-in-one. Seriously. "Does this mean you'll talk to me now?" he asked. "It means I don't have an effing four-footer," I said. He's told that story a million times.

what's wrong with the world, are especially knowledgeable about the damn Liberal Media, and will regale you with evidence that golf is disintegrating: Hats backwards! Mobile phones! Cargo shorts! Good partners share similar codes of conduct. If he's Old School, and you're a shirt-out, rock 'n' roller, beware. But if you're a traditionalist amused by changing standards, that's OK. My friend Squirrel, about a 4-handicap, plays with a boom box on his cart and sometimes dresses as the aforementioned animal. He has a very big tech job. When he applied to his local club, his wife said, "Are you sure you're country club material?" Good question. Turns out he is, but it's a tolerant country club, compatible with a passion for golf and the Doobies . . . Brothers, that is.

6 You're no moper. And you grant pardons like an outgoing prime minister. Regret's a killer. We had a colleague once whose favourite expression on Hole No.1 was, "Let's play two!" and on Hole No.5, "Why do I even put myself through this?!" He went from Ernie Banks to Eeyore in an hour – tough on himself and harder on his partner. Your partner doesn't need you obsessing about the chunk you hit into the pond to lose the front nine. He expects you to be ready for the next one. Woody Allen said, "My one regret in life is that

I'm not someone else." Sure, you both want to be better golfers; but you're fine with the ones you are.

7 You never give up. And then when you do, you re-up. Forgiveness does not equal surrender. You're enthusiastic, and you do your share of cheerleading. It's costly when this translates to making bets you shouldn't, but so it goes. Your model here is Arnold Palmer: "What other people may find in poetry or art museums, I find in the flight of a good drive." There you go. Tell 'em you'll take the double-or-nothing.



8 You play fast. You do not torture your partner with six practice swings. Imperfection is not the issue here. Subjecting your partner to half a dozen copies of it is. You play with alacrity. Results come and go quickly. You're like my friend Sissy, who shot 138 while her companion shot 68. It took them three and half hours to produce those 206 strokes, a thousand chuckles in between. Now that's a partner.

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